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American Dramatists' Series

A MAN'S WORLD

A Play in Four Acts by

RACHEL CROTHERS



BOSTON: RICHARD G. BADGER

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CHARACTERS

FRANK WARE.

LIONE BRUNE.

CLARA OAKES.

KIDDIE.

MALCOLM GASKELL.

FRITZ BAHN.

WELLS TREVOR.

EMILE GRIMEAUX.

A MAN'S WORLD

ACT I

Time—The present—Eight o'clock a winter evening.

Scene—Frank Ware's living room in an old house in lower New York. There is a door at C. back leading into hall. One at L. leading into sleeping room. A wide window cuts off the upper R. corner diagonally. Another window is down R. At L. a large old fashioned fire-place of white marble. Low open book shelves fill the wall spaces. In the upper corner L. is a large round table on which are magazines, a lamp—a box of cigarettes and a bowl of red apples. At L. C. a very large upholstered davenport facing the fire at a slanting angle. Below the fire a large arm-chair.

At back a baby grand piano stands R. of the door C.—the keyboard facing the window—a single chair before it. Below piano a small round table holding books and a work basket—a chair at L. of this table. Well out from the window R. is a large table desk with a chair on either side. The desk holds a student's lamp—magazines, newspapers, brass desk furnishings—and a great quantity of Mss. letters, etc.

On the book shelves are vases, several busts in

bronz and white—old bowls, a large Victory in white, and a great quantity of pictures on the walls—water colors, oils, sketches—all good.

The walls and ceilings are done in faded, old frescoes—and there is a C. gas chandelier of an old fashioned design.

The furniture is all old, but solid and the general air is that of past elegance grown shabby and invaded by up-to-date comfort and cheerfulness.

At curtain—Kiddie Ware, a sturdy boy of seven, is lying full length on sofa looking into fire. After a slight pause he rises—punches pillow and sulkily crosses to piano. With one finger he plays "Can you come out to-night boys" three times, with one note always wrong. He then crosses to window and looks eagerly out into the street. There is a soft rap at the door C. Pause—and the rap is repeated.

KIDDIE—(*Lifelessly.*) Come.

FRITZ—(*Opening the hall door.*) Wie gehts. Hello.

KIDDIE—(*Without turning.*) Hello!

(*Fritz Bahn is a young German. He is in evening clothes and carries a shabby top-coat, a cap and a violin case.*)

FRITZ—Where is de Frankie mutter?

KIDDIE—(*Still not turning.*) She hasn't come yet.

FRITZ—Ach! She is late. Don't you worry. She come soon. It is not eight o'clock all ready. (*Goes to child at window.*)

KIDDIE—I want Frankie.

FRITZ—Ach Gott, so do I—but we don't get everything we want.

KIDDIE—(*Still not turning from window.*) Why don't she come?

FRITZ—I tink she has had a very busy day with dot old publisher down town to-day. She will be so tired. Un? Yah, I tink it. Don't look all de time on de outside. She not come so. Look a liddle on de inside an she come. So.

KIDDIE—Light all the gas. She likes it.

FRITZ—(*Lighting the gas.*) So. Dere iss one—dere iss two—dere iss dree. So. Better? Un? Who lighted the first one for you all ready?

KIDDIE—Old Grumper, when she brought my supper. She was awful cross to-night.

FRITZ—No, iss dot so?

KIDDIE—Light the lamp.

FRITZ—(*Lighting student lamp on desk.*) Oh, yah. De light at de shrine. So. We are ready for her. Un? Wat did you do to-day?

KIDDIE—Nothing.

FRITZ—Nothing? Didn't you go to school?

KIDDIE—Yes.

FRITZ—And didn't that nice girl wat takes care

of you, take you to de park dis afternoon?

KIDDIE—Yes.

FRITZ—And did she go home already?

KIDDIE—Yes.

FRITZ—And you was alone dis evening waiting for de Frankie mudder. Ain't you going to smile yet? Wat will make you smile now? Shall I tell you—oh—such a funny story about Chris Kringle, wat's coming down your chimney next month already? (*Kiddie shakes his head.*) No? shall I—

KIDDIE—(*Solemnly.*) Be a monkey.

FRITZ—(*Hopping on a chair and imitating a monkey.*) Ach Gott! Dot iss too easy.

KIDDIE—I like that.

FRITZ—Well I am glad you like something.

KIDDIE—(*Going to kick the end of a couch.*)
I want Frankie to come.

FRITZ—Du Leiber! Can't you forget a liddle? She come soon, now. I tink she iss eating her dinner all ready down in de restaurant.

KIDDIE—She's going to take me to dinner to eat with her down in that restaurant, she said so.

FRITZ—No! How fine! I will haf to get invited on that time. You tink I can?

KIDDIE—Sing a song.

FRITZ—All my tricks, un? (*Going to piano he begins a German song—extravagantly—after first few bars—loud voices are heard in hall singing*

ACT I

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same tune. Wells and Emile bang on the door and enter arm in arm singing.

WELLS—For heaven's sake, can't you hear anything but your own voice.

EMILE—Que faites—vous? Oh, la, la, Tenez! Ou est las divinite?—Ou est la Divinite?

(Wells Trevors is a happy go lucky young American, good looking and goodnatured. He wears a shabby lounging coat. Emile Grimeaux is a small Frenchman of the unmistakable artist type. He wears a blue working blouse.)

WELLS—Where's Frankie? Kiddie?

KIDDIE—She hasn't come home yet.

FRITZ—*(Rising from piano and going to Wells thumping him in the ribs.)* It's too early all ready. Don't you know anything?

EMILE—Um—he knows nossing.

WELLS—I know a good sport when I see one. *(Going to Kiddie.)* Kiddie, old man, doesn't care when Frank gets home, do you? He can take care of himself, can't you? *(Wells doubles his fist and makes a pass at Kiddie, to which Kiddie quickly responds. They move to C. going on with mock fight.)*

FRITZ—Gif it to him, Kiddie. Goot! See! Ach du leiber Himmel! Keep at him! You have him going! *(Wells doubles back to L. towards the couch. Kiddie is excited with his victory.)*

EMILE—Viola! See ze liddle champion! En garde! Bien! Voila!

FRITZ—Reach for de chin.

EMILE—Non, no,—Kick him wiz se feet! (*Wells falls full length backwards on couch among pillows. Kiddie wildly excited.*)

FRITZ—(*Snatching a newspaper from the desk and giving it to Kiddie.*) Here—here—fan him! You must be goot to a man when he iss down.

WELLS—(*Gasping.*) Where am I?

FRITZ—You are wid friends. (*Kiddie takes paper and holding it at arms length, in both hands, fanning Wells laboriously.*) Haf you got your wind all ready?

EMILE—(*Laughing.*) I wonder where iss a cigarette. Oh—le voila!

WELLS—Let me have that paper, Kiddie. Did you see a criticism of Frank's book this morning?

EMILE—Non—I had not ze time. I haf painted all day like mad. I have had ze most wonderful—

WELLS—Here you are. (*Finding the article.*) "The Beaten Path" is the strongest thing that Frank Ware has ever done. Her first work attracted wide attention when we tho't Frank Ware was a man, but now that we know she is a woman we are more than ever impressed by the strength and scope of her work. She has laid her scenes this time on the East side in the wretched poverty

of the tenement houses, and the marvel is that any woman could see and know so much and depict crime and degradation so boldly. Her great cry is for women—to make them better by making them freer. It is decidedly the most striking book of the year. (*Kiddie with a heavy sigh goes back to the window.*) Bully good criticism.

FRITZ—It's a bully good book.

WELLS—You bet it is. Where does she get her stuff, anyway? After all, that's the point! How does she get it?

EMILE—Sere iss only one way. (*Rising and stretching himself complacently, standing with back to fire.*) A woman only gets what a man gives her. (*Fritz draws Kiddie away from the window and sitting R. of desk, takes him on his knee.*)

WELLS—(*Still lying on couch.*) Lione says the man is Gaskell.

EMILE—Zut! Gaskell has not ze romanse—ze mystery—ze charm for a secret love.

FRITZ—(*Attracting Kiddie's attention from the others by showing him a trick with his fingers.*) Can you do dot? It iss not so easy. Un?

WELLS—I'm hanged if I can tell whether it is Gaskel or not—but if it is—why the devil won't she marry him? I tell you Malcolm Gaskell's going to be a big man some day. He's got the grip on this newspaper all right, all right, and he's not

going to let go till he's got a darned good thing.

EMILE—Zat would be nossing to her. She wants ze love of ze poet—ze artist. It is not—

FRITZ—Wat are you talking about? It is not dis—it is not dat. It is not nobody.

EMILE—Oh, la, la! She is a very brilliant woman, but she cannot do what is impossible. She cannot write like a man unless a man help her—and no man could make her write like zat unless she love him.

FRITZ—(*Frowning fiercely and shaking his head at Emile, takes up picture to show Kiddie.*) Mine gracious! Look at dis beautiful ladies.

KIDDIE—I don't like 'em.

FRITZ—Ach Gott! Der is Fraulein Keppel who used to sing wid dot beautiful voice when I played in the orchestra in Berlin.

KIDDIE—There ain't anything funny in that old paper. Why don't they have Buster Brown every day?

FRITZ—Ach no. They have to keep Buster so we can tell ven it iss Sunday.

WELLS—(*In a lower voice to Emile.*) You can't see beyond the love idea. Frank isn't a Frenchwoman. What if there is a man helping her—it might be only a business deal.

EMILE—Oh—mon enfant!

FRITZ—(*Rising quickly as he puts Kiddie to the*

floor.) You are two big fools. (*To Kiddie.*) Kiddie, why don't you go down to the lower hall and wait dere for Frankie mutter?

KIDDIE—(*Going up to hall door.*) I'll stay by the door and when she comes in, I'll jump out at her. (*He goes out.*)

FRITZ—(*Going out into hall after him.*) Oh my! Dot will be so funny! She will jump so high.

EMILE—(*At fireplace.*) Au revoir, mon mig-non.

WELLS—So long, old man.

KIDDIE—(*Calling from the hall.*) I'm going to slide down the banisters.

FRITZ—(*In the door way.*) Don't break your neck, all ready. I vill watch! Ach Got! Be careful! Der you go. (*He closes door and goes down C.*) So you—her friends—are talking too.

EMILE—Oh—la—la!

FRITZ—You have listened to de gossip, de—

WELLS—(*Throwing down paper and sitting up.*) Oh, come off Fritz. Don't get excited. I say I don't know whether it's a love affair or not. *If it is Gaskell—*

FRITZ—If—if—if! Why do you always use dot mean little 'if'? Are you cowards? Are you afraid to say it is a lie?

EMILE—She does not deny it.

FRITZ—She would not stoop to deny it.

WELLS—I think Frank has had some grand smash up of a love affair sometime. I don't know whether Kiddie's her child or not—don't care—none of my business—but after she's had the courage to adopt the boy, and refuses to explain who he is—after she's made people respect her and accept the situation—I can't see for the life of me, why she lets *another* thing come up for people to talk about.

FRITZ—There *is* no other thing! That iss a lie.

EMILE—How do you know?

FRITZ—*You* know—*you* know it iss a lie! Why don't you kill it?

EMILE—How can you kill a lie about a woman?

FRITZ—Wid de truth.

EMILE—Mais! What *is* ze truth?

FRITZ—De truth iss—that she is a good woman and you are too small too liddle—too—too—too bad in your mind to know wat dot means.

EMILE—(*Following him to C.*) Prenez-garde! I am a Frenchman!

FRITZ—Yah, dot iss yust it. You don't know a good woman when you see one.

EMILE—"Good!" I said nossing about good or bad. It iss you—you who make her bad. You say she must live like zis or like zat—or like one little way *you* think—or she iss bad! Bah! What is bad? She iss good because she has a great heart—a great nature. She is brave enough to keep ziz child wiz

her—and snap ze fingers at ze world. She is kind as an angel—she is free—she is not afraid—but she must love because she is too great to live without love. Does zat make her bad? Allons donc! Because she does not tell who ze lover is does zat make her bad? Bah! It is you who are too small—too little too bete—too German to understand.

FRITZ—Oh, yah! yah, yah. You can talk wid your French talk. You mix up de good and de bad like you mix your black and white paint till you get a dirty something and say it iss beautiful. You say —“Oh, yah, she iss a good woman,” and you damn her wid dat nasty liddle shrug of dat nasty liddle shoulder.

EMILE—Wat do you—

FRITZ—You cannot do dat wid me. You are her friend or you are not her friend. You know dat she is what I know she is, and if you don't stop winking and wiggling and smiling—I vill—

EMILE—You will? What will you? It is not to you to tell me what I sink of her. You are only jealous. You say zer is no ozzer man because you are crazy wiz ze jealous. Hein! If you was ze man you would not care what I zink— (*Fritz rushes at Emile.*)

WELLS—(*Springing up from couch and going between them.*) Drop it you, fools!

KIDDER—(*Bursting into the room and getting be-*

hind the hall door.) Don't tell 'er where I am.

FRANK—(*Coming in with a rush.*) Oh, I'm so frightened! Something jumped out at me and ran up the stairs. Where's my Kiddie man to save me? Where is he I say.

EMILE—Il n'est pas ici. I do not see him.

WELLS—Didn't you see him? He went down to meet you. (*Kiddie and Frank both cautiously peer near edge of the door which is between them until they see each other and Kiddie springs into Frank's arms.*)

FRANK—(*Catching Kiddie to her and covering his face with kisses.*) My Kiddie man! Was I long? I tried so hard not to be late to-night. I must have a bigger hug than that.

KIDDIE—(*With a bear like hug.*) You was awful scared—wasn't you?

FRANK—'Deed I was—all to pieces!

KIDDIE—She jumped awful high, Fritz!

FRITZ—Yah, I told you.

FRANK—Well, how are you? You're lucky dogs to be so poor that you don't have to work. (*She smiles at them all with the frank abandon of being one of them—strong free, unafraid, with the glowing charm of a woman at the height of her development. Her clothes are simple and not new—but have a certain artistic individuality and style.*)

EMILE—Zen why do you kill yourself to get rich?

FRANK—I have to get rich for my Kiddie, don't I? See what you think of that, boy. (*Giving him a small package.*)

FRITZ—(*Helping Frank off with her coat.*) Have you had some dinner?

FRANK—Yes, I had a bite down town, but I'm hungry.

FRITZ—(*Putting her cloak on piano.*) I will get you some-ding.

WELLS—No, I'll chase out and get it.

EMILE—I will make you a salad, toute de suite.

FRANK—(*Sitting on the couch.*) No—no—no. Stay where you are—all of you. I know what I want. It's an apple. Give it to me, Wells. Oh—This is good! Be it ever so high up, there's no place like home. Take off my gloves, will you, Emile? Somebody might poke up the fire a bit. (*To Kiddie who is struggling with the toy.*) Can't you make it go, old man? Wind it up for him, Fritz. (*Emile having taken the gloves off goes back of couch and takes off her hat. Fritz takes the toy and sits on the floor tailor fashion. Kiddie sits in front of him with his back to audience. There is a long pause. Wells, peeling and slicing the apple sits on the L. arm of couch, holding the slices out to Frank on the end of the knife.*) What's the matter with you all? Anybody had bad luck? You're a cheerful set. Why don't you talk? Amuse

me. What are you good for? You look as cross as sticks, Fritz. Have you had a fight?

EMILE—Qui. We have had a grand fight.

FRANK—What about?

EMILE—About you.

FRANK—That's good. Who was on my side?

EMILE—We were all on your side, only in ze different way.

FRANK—What's your way? (*Kiddie runs to Frank, sitting on her lap.*)

EMILE—I say I have ze advantage of zem all—because I can put you in my pictures as I see you—as I understand you. You are in zem all—many women—in many moods. Mon Dieu! I have had a wonderful day! I have painted every minute till ze light is gone.

FRANK—You look it.

EMILE—I haf got it to-day—what I want—and it iss you zat I see in ziz picture.

FRITZ—(*Working with the toy on the floor.*) Nobody else vill see it.

EMILE—Ah, not ze nose—ze ears—ze chin, maybe—I am not, painting the photograph. I am painting the soul—ze soul of a woman.

FRITZ—How can you paint what you know nud-ding about?

FRANK—(*Laughing.*) How's the play, Wells?

WELLS—I rewrote the great third act to-day.

May I read it to you in the morning?

FRANK—Yes. (*As Kiddie hugs her.*) Aw—Kiddie—between you and the apple I am choking to death. What have you been doing to-day, Fritz?

FRITZ—(*Reaching for the toy which has run away from him.*) I have been gifting a five dollar violin lesson for a dollar fifty.

WELLS—Cash?

FRITZ—Yah.

WELLS—Then you haven't got any kick coming.

FRANK—Go and see that thing, Kiddie. Don't you like it? (*Kiddie goes to sit on the floor again.*)

FRITZ—(*Winding the toy.*) One of his legs is a liddle longer than he really ought to be.

KIDDIE—Make him go.

FRANK—What are you doing in your glad rags, Fritz? You ought not to be sitting on the floor so dressed up.

FRITZ—I am going to play Lione's accompaniments. She says it is a very fashionable function.

FRANK—Oh, yes, I remember. Get up and brush yourself off. What is she going to sing?

FRITZ—(*Rising and going to piano.*) She is going to sing dis for an encore.

WELLS—(*Putting apple and tray back on table up L.*) Lione's encores are her long suite.

FRANK—That's because she always sings Fritzie's songs for them. (*Fritz plays a tender little ger-*

man song, singing a strain here and there. Wells whistles. Frank closes her eyes listening.) Um—sweet. I could tell that was Fritzie's in the moon. Come and listen, Kiddie. (Kiddie runs to kneel on couch by Frank with his head on her shoulder. Lione's voice is heard singing the song from the hall. She throws open the hall door on a high note. Wells and Emile applaud her with good natured guying.

Lione Brune is a tall woman with rather striking beauty of a bold type, emphasized by her black gown which is very low and long.)

WELLS—Bravo! Bravo! Make your entrance again, my dear,—and I'll throw the lights on the door.

LIONE—I'm on now. You're too late for the cue.

FRANK—No one will dispute your Italian blood to-night, Lione.

LIONE—(*Sweeping down to fire.*) Why should they dispute it?

WELLS—(*Imitating her.*)—Why should they—but they do.

EMILE—A man say to me ze ozzer day—"Wat iss Miss Brune?" and I say—"Can you not see by ze look—ze voice—ze temperament?" And he says to me—"You mean Irish?"

LIONE—Beast! (*Sitting in arm chair down L.*)

WELLS—Italian extraction. Lione from Lena—Bruné—from Brown.

LIONE—That's brilliant dialogue, Wells. Put it in a play. Give me a cigarette, Emile. (*Emile lights a cigarette for her. Fritz plays again—they all whistle or sing for a moment with comfortable abandon.*)

Clara Oakes opens the door. She is a medium-sized woman of about 37—with a generally drab and nondescript appearance, looking thrown into her clothes which are somewhat passé. One refractory lock of hair falls over her face and her hat is on one side of her head—both of these she constantly tries to adjust. She speaks in a nervous gasping way and is just now very much out of breath.)

CLARA—Hello, everybody.

ALL—"Hello Clara."

LIONE—(*Condescendingly.*) Ah, cara mia, where have you been all day?

CLARA—Did you miss me, dearest?

LIONE—Of course I did. I wanted you to hook my gown.

CLARA—I am so sorry.

FRANK—Sit down, child.

CLARA—(*Sitting on the edge of the couch by Frank.*) I went into Cousin Mabel's and she asked

me to stay to dinner. So I did of course.

WELLS—Of course. Don't miss any of Cousin Mabel's dinners, Clara.

CLARA—(*Still out of breath.*) She sent me home in the motor.

FRANK—Too bad she didn't send you all the way up stairs in it.

CLARA—Yes. I ran up three flights I was in such a hurry to see you I have an idea.

LIONE—Well, sit back and either take your hat off or pin it on straight.

CLARA—Oh, is it crooked?

EMILE—It make ze whole room crooked—out of drawing. I cannot see anything else.

CLARA—(*Struggling with her hat and hair.*) Well—I'm going to give an exhibition.

FRITZ—(*From the piano where he is still playing very softly.*) Ach gott!

WELLS—What?

LIONE—Now, Clara, don't be a fool.

EMILE—And what are you going to exhibit?

FRANK—Be quiet. (*To Clara.*) Go on. Why shouldn't you give an exhibition? I wish to goodness you'd finish that miniature of Kiddie you began about six months ago.

CLARA—I will. I'll get to work at it right away. I'll make it *the* important picture of the exhibition.

FRANK—Kiddie can be there and walk up and down in front of it to show how good it is.

WELLS—I wouldn't run any unnecessary risks, Clara.

CLARA—You mean thing!

FRANK—Shut up, Wells. (*Throwing a pillow at him.*)

CLARA—You just wait—you just wait, you people. You don't believe in me. You don't think I am in earnest. I'll show you. I am going to get to work right away.

EMILE—Oh, you have some orders, zen?

CLARA—No—I didn't mean that. But Cousin Mabel says she'll let me do her miniature.

LIONE—*Let* you? For nothing?

CLARA—Well, yes. I don't mind that.

WELLS—Good Lord! (*An uproar from the others.*)

CLARA—Now, listen!

FRANK—Listen! Listen! Go on, Clara.

CLARA—Then if she likes it, she'll interest other people. That's what I've always wanted her to do, you know. Because if Cousin Mabel really wanted to she could do anything with her social position.

LIONE—Your Cousin Mabel and her social position make me sick. Why doesn't she give you an income?

CLARA—Oh, I couldn't accept that.

WELLS—You couldn't—if you didn't get it.

CLARA—You don't understand how conservative my people are.

LIONE—How stingy—you mean.

EMILE—Why don't you tell them all to go to ze devil?

CLARA—Oh, I couldn't do that. I can't afford to cut loose entirely from my family—tho' of course they object horribly to my working.

LIONE—They're a pack of snobs. Why don't they boost you along in society then, if they object to this?

CLARA—Well, I really think if I succeeded, they wouldn't mind so much.

LIONE—No—you bet. They'd all be running after you then.

EMILE—Zat is ze trouble. You are still hanging to ze petticoats of your fashionable world—and what do it do for you? Look at me—I am alone in a strange country. I have no influence—no rich friends. I am working for ze art—not for ze money.

FRITZ—(*Rising, getting pipe from overcoat and going to window.*) Dat is a good thing den.

EMILE—Bah! What is money?

WELLS—Don't ask me.

EMILE—Why don't you live for your art—and

starve for it if it must be.

FRITZ—Yah! And when you are hungry—eat one of your beautiful miniatures.

EMILE—Art has nossing to do wiz money.

WELLS—No, but money has something to do with art.

EMILE—In America, yes. Oui—zat is ze truth—ze sad truth. You have no art in America—and what you have is French. (*A laugh of tolerance from the others.*)

LIONE—I suppose you'll be swelling it, Frank, now that you don't have to make any sacrifices for the sake of your work.

FRANK—I never have made any for it.

LIONE—I'd be ashamed to confess it.

FRANK—Neither have you—none of you have. We're all working for money. We'd be fools if we didn't.

LIONE—Well—really—I tho't you had a few ideals.

FRANK—Never mind ideals. I've got a little talent and I'm trying to sell it. So are we all—because we haven't got anything else to sell. It's only genius that forgets money. Only the glory of creating that compensates for being hungry. No—no—talent wants three meals a day—genius can live in spite of none.

WELLS—Well, by God—I guess you're right.

Frank. I want to sell—and I'm going to hang on. I think I've got a chance—not because my plays are any good—but because other people's are so damned bad. (*All laugh and there is a general movement.*)

FRANK—(*Rising.*) Come, Kiddie, say good night.

KIDDIE—Aw—

FRANK—Not another minute. Past time now.

FRITZ—Gute nacht—mine kint.

KIDDIE—Gute nacht.

EMILE—Bonne nuit, mon petit. Dormez bien.

KIDDIE—Good night.

EMILE—Comment? Que dis tu? Ah! Mon Dieu! I will never make you a Frenchman if you do not speak ze language.

FRITZ—Don't speak den, Kiddie.

WELLS—Good night old man—I'll have to practice an uppercut for you.

KIDDIE—I'll do you up again.

CLARA—(*Catching Kiddie as he passes her.*) Good night, angel sweetheart. (*Kissing him on both cheeks.*)

KIDDIE—(*Rubbing his cheek.*) Night.

FRANK—Excuse me two minutes, good people. (*She follows Kiddie out closing the door.*)

CLARA—(*After pause.*) Dear Frank is so devoted to Kiddie.

LIONE—Yes, isn't she—as devoted—as a mother.

CLARA—Oh, I didn't mean *that*. That is—I—I—you—know what I mean. (*She looks from one to the other much embarrassed. A conscious pause.*) Oh, dear, I'm always saying the wrong thing. You know I just love Frank. I wouldn't criticize her for the world. Of course I do think you have to be very broad minded when you come into this atmosphere. Cousin Mabel says I am getting entirely too liberal—but then she—

WELLS—You're very liberal with your hair pins—they're all over the place. (*Giving her two from the floor.*)

CLARA—Oh, thank you, Wells. She also said my hair was too loose and that I was getting just like a bohemian. (*Laughing foolishly.*) She doesn't like it—but then she doesn't understand—you know.

WELLS—That's it. She doesn't understand. Cousin Mabel doesn't understand. You tell her it takes more than loose hair to make a bohemian—and you're getting to be an out and outer.

CLARA—(*Rising, laughing again—nervous—but immensely flattered.*) Oh, no, I'm not.

EMILE—Oui—oui—I can see it. It is there—that something—mysterious and illusive—the true mark of ze bohemian.

CLARA—Oh, don't say that. I—I think I'm just

as I always was.

WELLS—No, Clara, you're not. The change is so subtle that you don't know it yourself. But we feel it, you know.

LIONE—You want to be careful, Clara.

CLARA—Why what do you mean? Oh, dear!

FRITZ—You better make your hair tight again already.

CLARA—Well—I'm sure I don't know what you mean. I don't believe it any way. I'm going. (*Running out the hall door.*)

LIONE—(*Calling to her.*) I'm coming. Clara, get my coat out, will you?

WELLS—Poor Clara, she'd like to tip-toe through bohemia, but she's afraid of her petticoats.

EMILE—She will never be an artist.

FRITZ—But she makes very nice little pictures already.

LIONE—(*Sneeringly.*) Nobody said she didn't. You have charity to burn.

FRITZ—I would like to give some of it away.

LIONE—Oh, you mean I am uncharitable. Just because I'm not a fool and can see what's what as plain as the nose on your face.

WELLS—(*Dreading Lioné's temper.*) Well, I must skip. I've got to rewrite a whole play to-night. Come on, Emile. (*Pulling Emile to the door.*)

EMILE—No, I vill not—

WELLS—Come on. Come on. Good night. Hope you make a hit to-night, Lione. (*He pulls Emile out, closing the door.*)

LIONE—Pray, what did you mean by that speech?

FRITZ—You seem to tink you know.

LIONE—I wish you wouldn't imply before other people that you think I'm uncharitable to Frank. I have the greatest charity. I don't care what she has done, or is doing, or how many lovers she has. All I ask is that she doesn't *pose*. It's absurd the attitude she takes of being strong minded and independent and it makes me sick—simply *sick* to see her fool you and lead you around by the nose.

FRITZ—Sh! Be careful!

LIONE—Anybody—*anybody* can see that it's Gaskell. She's flirting with you and fooling you and using you as a blind—

FRITZ—What if she do lof Gaskell? What of it?

LIONE—What of it?

FRITZ—Dot—don't mean der is anything wrong or dot dere iss any reason for everybody in de house to talk and whisper and hint.

LIONE—I don't know whether you are so simple that you don't see—or so crazy about her that you lie for her.

FRITZ—Lie for her? Ah, Lione, why do you do dis? Are you out of your head? You are making it

all up.

LIONE—Don't you say that to me. I not only believe what I say—but something else.

FRITZ—What?

LIONE—Have you ever thought—Does Kiddie make you think of anyone?

FRITZ—What do you mean?

LIONE—I'll tell you some day—when I'm sure.

FRITZ—I don't understand you. (*He turns sharply and goes to lower window. She follows him.*)

LIONE—You're a fool! a fool—a fool! I'm only trying to save you. Now you've made me angry, Fritz, and I won't sing well.

FRITZ—Oh, yes, you will. You are very beautiful to-night.

LIONE—You only say that to— (*Lifting her face to him.*) Do you really think I am, Fritz?

FRITZ—I tink it, yah. Und I tink it iss time to go already.

LIONE—Come on then—I'll get my coat.

FRITZ—You get your coat und I come.

LIONE—You want to see *her*. Stay with her then. I don't want you to go with me.

FRITZ—I will come as soon as I—

LIONE—Stay with her. I won't be made a fool of.

FRITZ—I vill come in ten minutes.

LIONE—I don't want you. (*Rushing out and closing the door with a bang.*)

FRITZ—(*Calling.*) I will come. (*Fritz sighs and going to piano, plays again as Frank enters. She goes quietly to her desk—drawing pen and paper towards her. Fritz goes to stand at L. of desk. She smiles up at him with comfortable affection.*)

FRITZ—You are tired to-night, Yah? Un?

FRANK—A little Fritz.

FRITZ—Und you must work yet?

FRANK—I'm going out later.

FRITZ—Oh, no. Don't do dot!

FRANK—Oh, I must. If I get what I'm after to-night I'll have a fine study. I'm going to have supper with a girl from the East side.

FRITZ—I will be back. I vill go with you.

FRANK—Indeed you won't.

FRITZ—But, I don't want you to go—alone—at night.

FRANK—Now—now—Fritzie—if you get fidgety —

FRITZ—Oh—but de talk—de talk—I can't stand it for you. When you go out like dis people don't believe it is for your work. They say you have a lover—they say he writes your books.

FRANK—That's very flattering. It means that they think they are too good for a woman to do.

FRITZ—But you see you make dem talk when you do foolish things.

FRANK—Foolish? You mean going out alone? Good Heavens! You don't suppose I'm going to give up all my chances of seeing and knowing and understanding just because a few silly people are talking about me?

FRITZ—But you are a woman. You must not expect people to trust you—too much.

FRANK—I'm not going to spend my life explaining.

FRITZ—(*Sitting at L. of desk.*) No—but you—

FRANK—Oh, Fritz, don't. You've been so nice and so comfortable. And now you're beginning to worry. You see how much better it would have been for both of us if I'd never told you anything about myself and about Kiddie.

FRITZ—Don't say that. You have to talk to somebody—sometimes. Don't say you are sorry you told me, dot was de most natural ting I haf ever seen you do.

FRANK—Natural? Surely, I am nothing but natural. I'm a natural woman—because I've been a free one. Living alone with my father all those years made me so. He took me with him every possible place.

FRITZ—Ah—but he was with you to protect you.

FRANK—I didn't need much protection. Dad wanted me to see—to know—to touch all kinds of life—and I surely did. He developed all his stories by telling them aloud to me. He used to walk up and down the little library and talk out his characters. So I began to balance men and women very early—and the more I knew—the more I tho't the women had the worst of it.

FRITZ—Something has made you bitter to men.

FRANK—Kiddie has made me better. Poor little nameless fellow! I shall never forget the night his mother came to us. I didn't know her very well—she was only one of the hundreds of American girls studying in Paris—but she came to me because she wanted to get away from her own set. We kept her and she died when Kiddie was born—and then we kept him—because we didn't know what else in God's world to do with him—and then we loved him—and after father died—some how that poor, little, helpless baby was the greatest comfort in the world to me. I couldn't bear Paris without dad, so I came back to America. Kiddie was two then, and we set up house in this old place three years ago—and here we are—and it's nobody's business who he is. I don't *know* who his father was I don't *care* who he was—but my name is better for the boy than his—for mine is honest.

FRITZ—I tink it iss a too bad ting to be a woman wid a big mind, a big soul. Yah, I tink it. But I am glad you are one already.

FRANK—Dear old Fritz!

FRITZ—I only wonder wat will be de end.

FRANK—Kiddie will be the end of everything for me.

FRITZ—No—he vill not. Someday you vill lof a strong man—and he vill change it all.

FRANK—You don't believe me of course. But, its Kiddie—Kiddie I am living for. Everything I believe about men and women has been so intensified by him that he has become a sort of symbol to me of what women suffer through men—and he's given me a purpose—something to do.

FRITZ—I tink Malcolm Gaskell has cut me out wid—Kiddie.

FRANK—Nonsense! Nobody could do that.

FRITZ—I am not so sure. I think Gaskell can get most anything he want—if he try.

FRANK—Why don't you like him, Fritz?

FRITZ—He isn't de kind of a man dot every body knows all about and can trust de first time you see him.

FRANK—Yes, he is. That's just what Gaskell is. Whatever his faults may be at least they're honest, right out from the shoulder!

FRITZ—I am not—so sure. (*A pause.*) Don't

be sorry to-morrow that you haf talked a liddle to-night. It's gute for you—und don't tink I don't understand. Gute nacht. (*Giving her his hand.*)

FRANK—Good night Fritz. (*Fritz goes up to table by piano and picks up his violin case and overcoat There is a knock at hall door.*)

FRANK—Open the door. (*Fritz opens door and Malcolm Gaskell stands in the doorway. He is a tall, powerful looking man, about 40. The face is strong and reckless.*)

FRITZ—Speaking of the devil—here iss the old boy himself.

GASKELL—Hello, Bahn, you here? Good evening, Miss Ware.

FRANK—Good evening, Mr. Gaskell.

FRITZ—Yah—I am here—but I am going. She is very tired and very busy.

GASKELL—You must have stayed too long. (*To Frank.*) Why didn't you send him away?

FRITZ—She did.

GASKELL—That's good. I came to borrow a book.

FRANK—Help yourself.

GASKELL—(*Going to table up L. and selecting book he sits carelessly on couch.*) Thanks. (*Fritz still stands by door watching Gaskell.*) You don't seem to be going?

FRITZ—No, I'm holding the door open for you.

GASKELL—I'd rather you'd shut it for me.

FRITZ—Vell—I haf done my best—you see he is going to stay. (*Frank watches both men, much amused. Fritz starts to go as Lione appears in doorway. She wears a long coat and is drawing on her gloves petulantly.*)

LIONE—Well—really, I tho't you were coming for me.

FRITZ—Yah—I am just coming.

LIONE—I am not in the habit of going after my escorts.

FRITZ—Ach—Lione.

LIONE—It's frightfully late. Of course some people are such sirens. (*With a withering glance at Frank.*) Oh—Mr. Gaskell—too. You're so popular, Frank.

FRANK—I am with some people. You don't appreciate me, Lione.

LIONE—At least I understand you. I'm ready, Fritz. (*She sweeps out—Fritz following meekly, nodding to Frank as he closes door.*)

GASKELL—You ought to look out for the stiletto under that Italian cloak. I am sure she's got it ready for you.

FRANK—Don't laugh.

GASKELL—(*Rising and going C.*) Why not?

FRANK—It isn't a joke—poor girl.

GASKELL—It is decidedly a joke to see that big

tempestuous Lione bow down to the little pink and white Fritz.

FRANK—You're decidedly off when you call Fritz pink and white.

GASKELL—He couldn't be that and love you, I suppose?

FRANK—(*Sitting sideways in the chair at L. of desk.*) What did you come for?

GASKELL—Your book. I want to read it again. You haven't given me a copy.

FRANK—Why don't you buy one and help the sale?

GASKELL—I did buy one—but I threw it away—it irritated me.

FRANK—Then you don't need another one.

GASKELL—No—I don't need it—I admit, but I want it. I want to read it again. I want to see why people are talking about it.

FRANK—You don't see then?

GASKELL—I don't see why they say it's so strong. It's clever as the deuce and it's got a lot of you in it—but it isn't big. Our paper gave you a darned good criticism. Did you see it? (*Handing her a paper from his pocket.*)

FRANK—(*Taking paper and getting scissors from desk she goes to couch.*) Yes, I saw it. Much obliged to your paper.

GASKELL—(*Following her.*) Your story's all

right—a man couldn't have done it any better—your people are clean cut as a man's.

FRANK—Oh, thank you.

GASKELL—(*Standing with his back to fire looking down at her.*) But—it's only a story. You haven't got at the social evil in the real sense. You couldn't tackle that. It's too big for you. You've taken the poverty and the wrongs of the woman on the East Side as an effective back-ground for your story, and you've let your dare-devil profligate girl rail against men and the world. She says some darn good things—more or less true—but—you don't get *at* the thing. You keep banging away about woman—woman and what she could do for herself if she would. Why—this is a man's world. Women'll never change anything.

FRANK—Oh! (*Smiling.*)

GASKELL—Man sets the standard for woman. He knows she's better than he is and he demands that she be—and if she isn't she's got to suffer for it. That's the whole business in a nut shell—and you know it.

FRANK—Oh, don't begin that again. I know your arguments backwards.

GASKELL—How did you happen to come here anyway? This isn't a good place for you to live.

FRANK—Why did you?

GASKELL—Oh, this is all right for a man.

FRANK—Rather good for me too. The house is filled with independent women who are making their own living.

GASKELL—And you also have a little court of admirers here—all more or less in love with you—all curious—most of them doubting and all of them gossiping about you to beat the band. Don't you know that?

FRANK—Let's talk about something else for a change.

GASKELL—Hang it! Somebody's got to tell you. You can't live the way you do and do the things you do—without running your head into a noose—just as any other woman would.

FRANK—I don't know why you take the trouble to say all this.

GASKELL—I don't know why I do myself, for Lord knows, I wouldn't stop you in anything you're trying to do. I like your pluck. I say go on. I understand you—but you needn't think for a moment anybody else does. I don't question you. I take you just as you are. I suppose you think this Dutchman understands you?

FRANK—He isn't impertinent to say the least.

GASKELL—No, I suppose not. He wouldn't dare to disagree with you.

FRANK—Oh, yes he would. Fritz has a mind of his own and a very strong character. He is a genius

beside. If he only had a chance to be heard. I wish you'd do something for him, you know so many people. You've got a lot of influence in that direction. Don't you want to?

GASKELL—Do you really want me to?

FRANK—Oh, awfully. He has the real thing—you know he has. Don't you know it?

GASKELL—Oh, I suppose so,—the real thing is fiddling—but that's not much for a man.

FRANK—He's here without friends—without money. He ought to be heard.

GASKELL—What do you want me to do?

FRANK—Talk him up to somebody. He can't do that sort of thing for himself. He's too sensitive and too fine.

GASKELL—Sensitive and fine—be hanged. That won't get him any where.

FRANK—(*Rising to go back to desk with the clipping.*) I hate you when you say things like that.

GASKELL—(*Catching her hand as she passes him.*) Do you hate me! Do you?

FRANK—Then don't be so—

GASKELL—So what—? Don't you think I'm—What do you think of me? Tell me.

FRANK—I think you don't mean half you say.

GASKELL—Oh, yes, I do. And a good deal more. You don't mean half *you* say—they're only ideals.

FRANK—Oh!

GASKELL—You'll acknowledge it some day—when you care for a man. You won't give a hang for anything you ever believed then.

FRANK—Oh, yes, I will—and I'll care what he believes.

GASKELL—(*Bending close to her.*) You'll believe that you've got to live while you are young and you'll believe that love is the only thing that counts much for a woman.

FRANK—No—no—no!

GASKELL—It is. Women are only meant to be loved—and men have got to take care of them. That's the whole business. You'll acknowledge it some day—when you do—love somebody.

FRANK—It would only make me feel more—more than ever the responsibility of love of life. (*She moves back from him—looking at him while she speaks.*)

GASKELL—(*After a pause.*) Come out after while and have a bite of supper with me. Will you?

FRANK—Oh, couldn't—possibly. (*Sitting at her desk and drawing a MS. towards her.*)

GASKELL—Please.

FRANK—No—really I can't. I have to work.

GASKELL—Well—get to work and I'll come back for you—any time you say.

FRANK—Can't. I'm going out at twelve any-

way.

GASKELL—Oh, that's different—if you're going out to supper anyway.

FRANK—I'm going to have supper with a girl from the East side.

GASKELL—Why in the name of heaven are you going at 12 o'clock?

FRANK—She is going to bring her sweetheart for me to see and he can't get off any other time.

GASKELL—I'll go with you.

FRANK—No, you—

GASKELL—Yes, I will.

FRANK—Indeed you won't. I want them to be natural and talk. She's had a tragic story and this fellow knows all about it and is going to marry her. She is helping me a lot in my club for girls over there—she can get at them because she's been through it all and has come out a fine, decent woman.

GASKELL—I can't see for the life of me why you go banging around over there—wasting your time—getting into all sorts of disagreeable things. What's the use?

FRANK—What's the use? I call it some use to get hold of about a dozen girls a year and make them want to lead decent lives.

GASKELL—*(After a pause.)* Are you going to let your Fritz go with you?

FRANK—Of course not.

GASKELL—Thought perhaps you would. He makes a pretty good watch dog trotting around after you. Doesn't he?

FRANK—He makes a pretty good friend. (*Rising*) You must skip now. I've got to get to work!

GASKELL—I don't want to go.

FRANK—Come on. (*They walk together to door.*)

GASKELL—(*Standing in the open door.*) You're awfully hard on me.

FRANK—Poor you!

GASKELL—That's right. You don't know how nice I could be if you didn't fight with me.

FRANK—You always begin it.

GASKELL—Will you come to dinner to-morrow night and see a show? Will you—will you? (*After a pause she nods smilingly.*) Good. (*Taking her hand.*) And we won't fight? (*She shakes her head.*) Not a bit?

FRANK—(*Drawing her hand away.*) Not a bit.

GASKELL—If you were only as kind to me as you are to—everybody else—I'd be—

FRANK—You wouldn't like me at all.

GASKELL—Try it.

FRANK—I couldn't. Nobody could get on with you without fighting.

GASKELL—Oh, don't say that

FRANK—It's the truth. You're a head-strong, domineering—

GASKELL—Just because I don't crawl at your feet the way the other fellows do. Do you hate me?

FRANK—You said that before. Skip now. Good-night.

GASKELL—(*Taking book out of pocket.*) Are you going to give me this?

FRANK—I said no.

GASKELL—But I've got it.

FRANK—(*Putting her hand on the book.*) But I haven't given it to you.

GASKELL—You'll never give me anything. I'll have to fight for it. (*He snatches her hand and kisses her wrist and arm and goes out—closing the door. Hesitating she puts her hand over the arm where he kissed it and puts her arm on the door hiding her face in it.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II.

Scene—A room in the same house, occupied by Clara and Lione. Long double windows at back. A single door at L. leading into hall. A single door at R. opening into a closet. An old-fashioned fire-place below closet at R.

Down R. below the fire-place a large hassock. Before upper end of fire-place a large arm chair. To the right of windows at back a couch bed—covered with a dark cover, and holding two pillows. Before the windows are two screens for holding pictures. They have only a single panel and stand on spreading feet, and are made of a plainwood and brown canvas. To the L. of windows is a wash stand, with bowl, pitcher, etc., of flowered china. Above the door at L. is a bureau crowded with toilet articles, a small china bowl, a few books, cigarettes, matches, etc.

Half hiding the bureau and wash-stand is a large screen of four leaves. Below the screen an upright piano, and at L. C. a good sized round table with a chair between it and the piano. A chair to R. of table, and one below it to the L.

At L. below the door is another couch bed, covered with a dark cover, and holding several pillows.

On the table C. are a brass tea service and a dozen teacups and saucers of various kinds—and a white lace cover.

On the piano are piles of music and a small clock. The mantel holds a brass candle stick, a few ornaments and a great many photographs.

The furniture is old fashioned, heavy black walnut. The walls are covered with a dull faded paper—which is badly torn above the couch at R. There are a few effective pictures—water-colors prints, etc., on the walls.

Time—Four weeks later, 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

At curtain—Lione, with the front of her skirt turned up and a towel pinned over it as on apron, is sitting on the couch down L., polishing a brass candle stick with a flannel rag. Clara wears a skirt and shirt-waist, which do not meet in the back, and a much be-smear'd painting apron. The same lock of hair of act one is constantly falling over her face and she mechanically pushes it back.

CLARA—(Going to take a work-basket from the table to put it on bureau at L.) Oh, dear! I hope it pays for all the trouble. Cousin Mabel may have one of her headaches at the last minute and not come at all. She's really awfully pleased with her miniature. It flatters her horribly. I do want to be honest and true in my work, but what are you

going to do? No woman will accept a miniature unless it does flatter her.

LIONE—I hope to goodness somebody gives you an order after this affair. I'm ruining my hands cleaning these things.

CLARA—Don't do them well. We'll never be ready by four o'clock. It's two now. (*Taking hat from arm chair and dropping on her knees before the couch up R. She draws a hat box from under the bed and puts the hat in it.*)

LIONE—If your cousin doesn't come, I'd never speak to her again in all my life, if I were you.

CLARA—(*Getting flat on the floor to reach a dress box under the bed.*) Oh, pooh! She wouldn't care whether I did or not.

LIONE—Your cousin Mabel's a damned snob—that's what she is.

CLARA—(*Taking a shabby afternoon gown from the box.*)—Oh, she doesn't mean to be. She's just like everybody else in her world. (*Examining the gown.*)

LIONE—I hate 'em. Ignorant, idle, society women. That's all they are.

CLARA—You'd give your ears to be one tho'.

LIONE—(*Rising and leaving candles on couch, as she goes to look at herself at bureau.*) I wouldn't I wouldn't give up my career for anything on earth.

CLARA—Yes, that's what I used to think—but

somehow, I'm not so keen about my—Goodness, this is mussed and shabby! Absolutely the only rag I've got to wear. (*Hanging the gown on the chandelier below the fireplace she pushes the box back—and arranges the cover on couch.*) Oh, I must get the rest of the miniatures up. Here's Kiddie's picture. Where's the best place to put this?

LIONE—I think Frank's got an awful nerve to let you display it at all.

CLARA—Why?

LIONE—Why? Because people will ask who he is.

CLARA—Oh, well, I'll just say he's a little boy that Frank Ware adopted.

LIONE—(*Going to put a candle stick on mantel.*) Yes, that sounds well.

CLARA—Well, it's plausible. (*Putting the miniature on the screen and standing back to see how it looks.*)

LIONE—Not to me. The men say she isn't in love with Gaskell. Why, she is, head over heels—and sometimes I think—

CLARA—What?

LIONE—Sometimes—I think—(*Going to Clara.*) —he is Kiddie's father.

CLARA—What? Oh, horrible, Lione. She never saw Gaskell till she came here.

LIONE—Yes, so they say. Let me see Kiddie's

picture. Frank used to live in Paris, and so did Gaskell.

CLARA—Oh, Goodness! I never dreamed of such a thing.

LIONE—(*Going to sit at R. of table and looking closely at miniature.*) Several times I've thought—

CLARA—You'd better keep on working. The tea table isn't ready at all. I hope to goodness nobody looks behind this screen.

LIONE—(*Starting as she looks at picture.*) It isn't imagination. I do see it—as true as I live.

CLARA—What's the matter?

LIONE—Look! Come here.

FRITZ—(*Calling as he knocks.*) Can I come in?

CLARA—Yes, come. (*Fritz enters carrying a screen like the others. He is in his shirt-sleeves.*) Oh, you angel! Put it over there. The screens are perfectly splendid. I'm so grateful. Really I am. You've so clever to have made them. I never could have afforded to have them if you hadn't—

FRITZ—(*Putting screen near the others.*) I like to do it.

CLARA—You're a genius, Fritz.

FRITZ—Yah—but I am too many kinds of a one. Dat iss my trouble.

CLARA—(*As they adjust the screens.*) You

ought to stick to your violin. That's where your genius is.

FRITZ—Yah. But de great American public doesn't seem to know it.

CLARA—Yes—I know—I know. Isn't it awful? I hope to goodness somebody gives me at least one order from this exhibition.

FRITZ—Oh, yah, you get some.

CLARA—I wish I were as cheerful as you are. Did you ask Emile if I could have his tapestry for this afternoon?

FRITZ—Ach du lieber! You ask him. He vill not gif it to me. Dot tapestry is de apple core of his eye.

CLARA—I'm going to ask him now. It won't hurt it a bit and I want it awfully to put above that couch over there—to hide the hole in the paper. (*She goes out.*)

FRITZ—(*Going to look over Lione's shoulder.*) What are you looking at?

LIONE—(*Hiding the miniature.*) Nothing.

FRITZ—Let me see.

LIONE—I've just decided something. Something I've half way believed for a long time.

FRITZ—What is dot?

LIONE—I don't know that I'll tell you.

FRITZ—Please.

LIONE—I've found out something and you'll pre-

tend not to see it.

FRITZ—How do you know that unless you tell me what it iss?

LIONE—Because I know *you*.

FRITZ—Tell me, please—please. You have very pretty eyes.

LIONE—Had you forgotten that?

FRITZ—No.

LIONE—It's the last woman who comes along with you, Fritz.

FRITZ—Every woman keeps her own place in a man's heart.

LIONE—What I don't understand about you is—how can you let a woman flirt with you when you know she is crazy about another man.

FRITZ—You mean Frank? She does not flirt with me. She iss a friend.

LIONE—Will you admit that she's in love with Gaskell?

FRITZ—She don't want to love any man.

LIONE—Oh, is that what she tells you?

FRITZ—No—no—she tells me nodding. Dat iss what I tink.

LIONE—You do? Well, you're about as wise as a kitten. I know she's in love with Gaskell and I think she always has been—that is—long before she came here.

FRITZ—Ach! Why? Why you tink dot? She

never know him.

LIONE—(*Lifting the miniature.*) Whom does Kiddie look like?

FRITZ—What do you mean?

LIONE—Look.

FRITZ—No, no—I will not look.

LIONE—(*Catching his arm.*) Why won't you look? Are you afraid to?

FRITZ—No—no—I am not afraid. Why should I be?

LIONE—Why you are so excited?

FRITZ—I am not excited.

LIONE—You are. Oh! You see the resemblance too, do you?

FRITZ—What resemblance? I don't know what you are talking about.

LIONE—Don't you? Who is he like thro' the eyes?

FRITZ—Who? He iss like himself.

LIONE—(*Holding the picture before him.*) It's Malcolm Gaskell!

FRITZ—(*Closing his eyes.*) Ach Gott! What do you mean?

LIONE—You know what it means. Frank came here alone with this child. There is a mystery about her—then Gaskell comes—they're in love with each other and pretend not to be. I'll bet anything you like, Gaskell is this boy's father.

FRITZ—You have made it all up.

LIONE—You either know it's the truth or you're *afraid* it is. I'll tell her that I know.

FRITZ—No.

LIONE—I will—I will—I will. There's no reason why I shouldn't and there's every reason why I should.

FRITZ—Listen to me. If you will promise to keep still—if you will promise to say nodding to anybody about it, I will tell you what I tink.

LIONE—(*Looking at him keenly.*) What's that?

FRITZ—Frank has told us he is de child of a woman who died.

LIONE—Yes—but who is the father?

FRITZ—*She* don't know who de fadder was. But when Gaskell first came here *I* see dis resemblance and *I* believe he is de boy's fadder. Maybe he don't know it—maybe he do—but Frank don't know it. I am as sure of dat as I am standing here.

LIONE—Fritz, you must think I'm an awful fool. Of all the cock and bull stories I ever heard—that's the worst.

FRITZ—It might—it might be. Dis iss a strange und funny old world.

LIONE—But it isn't as funny as that. Oh, Fritz, I want to save you from this woman, from her influence.

FRITZ—She iss de best influence dot efer came into

my life.

LIONE—What's going to come of it?

FRITZ—Nodding.

LIONE—You love her?

FRITZ—You are two women, Lione. You and I used to haf such good times togedder. I lof your voice, Lione, you haf someding great in it. I like to play for you when you sing. You are so jolly and so sweet when you—when you are nice. Why can't it always be so? Why can't we always be friends?

LIONE—She's changed everything. She's spoiled everything. She's ruining your life—and I'm trying to save you.

FRITZ—No—Lione—you don't—

LIONE—I've wasted my friendship on you—wasted it—wasted it—!

CLARA—(*Opening the door.*) Yes—yes—if I get an order from this exhibition I'll blow you all to a supper. (*Emile follows. He is in his blouse and carries a large tapestry over his shoulder. Wells comes next carrying a quantity of curious daggers, foils, Indian weapons, etc.*)

EMILE—Where will you have it?

CLARA—There—over there. (*Pointing above couch up R.* Put that stuff on the arm chair, Wells—till we put it up. I'm so much obliged.

WELLS—(*Striding across the room with the tap-*

estry dragging he stops C. and recites elaborately.)

Clara, I've composed an ode to the occasion.

Ahem!

Clara, Clara's giving a show,

She makes miniatures, you know;

She gives you cake, she gives you tea,

She's polite as she can be.

But don't just eat her cake and tea,

She would like some cash you see.

Don't say just—"How charming dear.

Oh, how quaint and sweet and queer!"

But let her paint your pretty faces

With a rose bud and the laces.

Then the checks that you have sent

Will pay our Clara's board and rent.

(The others laugh and applaud.)

WELLS—*(Suddenly seeing Clara's gown hanging below fireplace, and springing back.)* Great Heavens! Is that your astral body?

CLARA—No, it's my last year's body.

EMILE—Where did you say to put zis?

CLARA—*(Going to couch R.)* Right over this. It will cover the hole.

EMILE—Mais! Mon Dieu! Ze tapestry will not show. It belong to Napoleon.

WELLS—*(Holding out Indian hatchet.)* This belonged to George Washington.

CLARA—Get up there, Emile. You take the oth-

er end, Wells, and I'll get you some tacks.

WELLS—(*As he and Emile get on couch.*) Where are you going to put the weapons of warfare?

CLARA—(*Going to bureau and taking tacks out of china bowl.*) Right over the tapestry.

EMILE—Sacre! You are not going to put ze relics of your savages with ze tapestry of Napoleon!

CLARA—(*With tacks in her mouth.*) Why not? It will be effective and nobody will notice whether they really go together or not.

EMILE—Zat is ze American. You mix your Art until nobody knows what you mean.

CLARA—I don't want it to *mean* anything. I want it to cover the hole. Here— (*Holding up shabby slipper and tacks.*)

EMILE—(*Taking slipper.*) What is zis for?

CLARA—To pound with, of course.

WELLS—You wouldn't expect that artistic temperament to have a hammer, would you? Go on. Hold up your end and fire away, Napoleon. Don't stop for details. (*Emile and Wells begin to hang the tapestry. Lione has sat on the floor by the couch down L. and taking a box from under it gets out teaspoons which she rubs with a towel.*)

CLARA—That isn't straight. Lift your end—

FRANK—(*Coming in carrying a large bunch of roses in a paper. She is wearing a very charming*

afternoon gown and hat.) Hello, everybody.

ALL—(*Except Lione.*) Hello! Hello, Frank!

FRANK—How're you getting on? Oh, how nice you're going to look.

CLARA—And how nice *you* look.

FRANK—I bought these for your tea table.

CLARA—You darling! Just what I wanted. But, how awfully extravagant!

FRANK—Not extravagant at all. Marked down on the corner. Not warranted to last over night—but I think they'll get through the afternoon. Have you got anything to put them in?

CLARA—Nothing high enough.

FRANK—Get the tall vase out of my room—will you, Fritz? And isn't there anything else you want?

LIONE—We have everything we want thank you.

FRANK—You're lucky. Here's the key, Fritz, will you get the vase?

FRITZ—Yah, I get it. (*Going out with the key.*)

CLARA—(*Moving the large screen so the bureau and wash stand are hidden.*) You'll sit here, Frank, when you serve the tea.

FRANK—(*Squeezing into the chair between the table and piano.*) Give me room enough to get in.

CLARA—Oh, well, you can get in before the people come. Now, Emile, listen. You said you'd help

Frank with the tea. When you take the cups away don't move the screen what ever you do. Just hand them around like this. See—

EMILE—Bien.

CLARA—And Mrs. Grumper will be behind the screen *washing*.

WELLS—What?

CLARA—Washing cups, you goose!

WELLS—Oh!

CLARA—And all you have to do, Emile—

WELLS—All you have to do is to whisper—"One wash."

FRANK—(*Laughing.*) What are you going to have—just tea?

CLARA—Heavens yes. Don't you think it's enough?

FRANK—Oh, of course. I only wanted to know.

WELLS—Nothing else—on the side?

CLARA—Oh, I wouldn't dare. Cousin Mabel would say there was drinking and carousing going on.

WELLS—Give Cousin Mabel a drink or two and she might pay for her picture.

FRANK—Kiddie's quite excited about his picture being displayed. (*Lione looks up at Frank quickly and watches her a moment.*) He said this morning—"Don't you think I ought to be there and see if they could guess who it is?"

CLARA—Bless his heart!

WELLS—Yes, you might make it a guessing party, Clara.

LIONE—To guess who Kiddie is, you mean?
(*There is a slight pause as they all look from Lione to Frank.*)

WELLS—I meant to guess which is Kiddie's picture.

FRANK—We might all guess now—what Lione means. (*A pause—Lione rises puts spoons on table—looks at Frank and goes up to window.*)

FRITZ—(*Enters with medium sized glass vase.*)
Here you are.

FRANK—No, you aren't. That isn't it at all. I meant the tall one.

FRITZ—Ach du lieber! Dis iss all I see.

FRANK—(*Rising.*) I'll get it.

FRITZ—No—I'll go back. I am sorry.

FRANK—I'd rather go—thank you. I want to get something else. Oh, Clara,—don't you want some more pillows and rugs and things?

CLARA—I'd just love them.

FRANK—And are you going to wear that?
(*Pointing to the gown hanging on the chandelier.*)

CLARA—Yes—It's all I've got.

FRANK—Don't you think it would be rather pretty with that little lace jacket of mine over it?

CLARA—Oh, heavenly! May I?

FRANK—Of course. (*Clara pushes her lock of hair back.*) And I wish you'd let me do your hair. I'd love to try it a different way.

CLARA—You're an angel. I wish you would. I don't seem to be able to make it stay up. It drives Cousin Mabel crazy. Wells says it's temperament, you know. (*Giggling.*)

FRANK—Well, lets see if we can't hold your temperament in a little.

CLARA—You're awfully good, Frank. Really you are.

FRANK—Nonsense! Fritz, will you come and help me bring some things? Fritz!

FRITZ—Yah?

FRANK—Will you come and help me bring some things?

FRITZ—Oh, yah, I come. (*He goes out with Frank closing the door.*)

CLARA—Frank's a dear. She's got the biggest heart.

EMILE—I do not sink Fritz tinks her heart is quite big enough. He would like to get in.

WELLS—(*Kicking Emile and looking at Lione.*) You don't know anything about her heart.

CLARA—I wish I did. I think it would be awfully interesting to know whether she really cares for Gaskell or not.

WELLS—Give us more bric-a-brac, Clara, if you

want it all up.

CLARA—Oh, yes, use it all. (*Giving Wells another weapon from chair.*)

EMILE—I tell you she love somebody. Zat iss her charm—her mystery. She could not be what she iss wiz out love.

WELLS—She's a mystery to me all right, all right.

CLARA—She certainly is to me.

LIONE—She certainly is not to me. Look here—all of you. (*Holding out the picture.*) Whom does Kiddie look like?

CLARA—Oh, gracious! What do you mean?

LIONE—Simply what I say. Whom does he look like?

EMILE—You mean like Frank?

LIONE—No, no. Not like Frank. Look now—thro' the eyes.

CLARA—I don't see it—and I ought to if anybody does—I painted it. What do you mean, Lione, anybody we know?

WELLS—You couldn't very well see a resemblance to anybody you didn't know.

CLARA—Well, dear me. I don't see—thro' the eyes— Oh, Heaven's—yes—I do.

LIONE—You see it! Wait!—Don't say anything.

WELLS—Oh, you can imagine anything.

LIONE—You can't imagine anything as strong

as that.

CLARA—Yes—I actually—

EMILE—Ah! Mon Dieu! I see what you mean.
It is Gaskell.

WELLS—What—

EMILE—Ah! C'est extraordinaire!

LIONE—(*Looking triumphantly at Wells.*) We
all see it.

WELLS—Rot—rot! Nothing of the sort. I don't
see the slightest—

LIONE—We see it. All of us.

CLARA—I think I do—I did. It sort of comes
and goes,

WELLS—Especially goes. I don't see it.

LIONE—You're blind. Look—it's Gaskell. That
child looks like Malcolm Gaskell—and *any* body
can see it. Unless they don't want to.

EMILE—Mais oui! I see it. It is here, the eyes.
For *you*—Clara, it iz wonderful—you haf caught
ze trick wiz ze eyes.

LIONE—Of course it's there.

CLARA—Oh my! I think it's awful. What do
you mean, Lione? I don't know what you mean.

WELLS—Nothing. It doesn't mean anything.

LIONE—Oh, no. Nobody means anything—no-
body knows anything—nobody says anything—but
you all *think* what I do—and you haven't got the
courage to say so. I have you know. I believe in

saying what you think—and not pretending to be fooled.

WELLS—Well, now, what of it? What if what you imply is true. What of it? What's the good of digging it up?

CLARA—Oh, dear! I don't believe it at all.

EMILE—I tell you all—all ze time—you are foolish as babies not to understand.

WELLS—Oh, yes, you understand a lot, you do. I say, what's the use of talking about it? Let it alone.

LIONE—Oh, very well, if that's the sort of thing you accept and believe in—that's your affair—but I don't propose to help a woman of that sort keep up appearances by pretending that I don't see what's right under my nose.

CLARA—Oh, dear! I never was in anything like this before. I think you have to have strict ideas even if you are broadminded. I do think—Oh, dear! I don't know what to think.

EMILE—You amuse me—all. You pretend to live in ze world of art and freedom and yet you make ze grand fight about—about what? What are you talking about? What do you expect—you funny Americans. She is a great woman—she must live and love and—

LIONE—You needn't say that to me. I don't — (*Frank knocks and opens the door. Lione puts*

the miniature back in her blouse. Frank has taken off her hat and coat. She carries a sofa pillow under each arm, and the lace coat. She has also the vase and the two framed pictures in silver frames in her hands. Fritz follows with four pillows and a rug.)

FRANK—(*Laughing.*) We met old Grumper in the hall and she tho't the house was on fire. (*An uncomfortable pause.*) You don't seem to think that is funny. (*Putting vase on table and throwing the two pillows onto the couch L. she hangs the coat over screen.*) This is the vase I meant. (*Fritz goes behind piano and filling vase from pitcher puts it on table and remains up C.*)

WELLS—Come on, girls, your lunch is ready. Sorry we didn't know you'd be home, Frank. We've only got enough for four.

FRANK—That's all right. I've had my luncheon.

LIONE—Come on, Clara.

CLARA—You don't mind my going, do you, Frank?

FRANK—Of course not. I'll do the flowers for you.

WELLS—We've only got salad and cheese. Thought the girls wouldn't have time to go out to-day—so we're setting them up.

FRANK—How nice of you!

EMILE—(*To Frank.*) You are an angel. Je

vous adore.

CLARA—I hate to go and leave you—but—

LIONE—Come on Clara, don't keep everybody waiting— (*Lione goes out.*)

WELLS—(*Catching Clara by L. hand and pulling her to door.*) On, Clara, on, to the feast. On Clara, let us be mad and gay while life is fleeting. (*Exit Wells, Emile, and Clara laughing.*)

FRANK—Weren't you invited to the party?

FRITZ—Nein. No, I was not invited.

FRANK—Put the pillows on the other couch. I do hope this affair does Clara some good. The screens are splendid. Where's Kiddie's picture? Do you know?

FRITZ—A—no, I don't know.

FRANK—(*Going to look on the screens.*) I don't see it.

FRITZ—Oh, I think she has not yet hung them all.

FRANK—It looks as if she had. I don't see it. Funny! Is it on that one?

FRITZ—No.

FRANK—Here's a vacant space. Maybe she's taken it down. I wonder where it is. Oh!

FRITZ—What it is?

FRANK—I just tho't of something.

FRITZ—What is dot you tink of?

FRANK—I tho't maybe Lione took it down. I

have a sort of feeling about the miniature from something she said just now. Fritz, tell me honestly. Do they talk about it much? Do they? Oh, they do.

FRITZ—Frankie, I want you to do something. You must tell them—more about Kiddie.

FRANK—No! Fritz, do you doubt what I've told you about him?

FRITZ—If I do not believe you, I believe nothing in de world. But—

FRANK—But what?

FRITZ—But you see you haf gifen me your confidence. You haf only tell a little to dem—just enough to make dem doubt—and it hurts you.

FRANK—All I want to do is to keep still and help Kiddie make his life clean and honest, and then let the world judge him by himself. I don't see anything foolish in that.

FRITZ—That's all very well for him—but you must think of yourself too—your reputation.

FRANK—Now, see here, Fritz, I care just as much about my reputation as any woman in the world, but this talk is only idle gossip and curiosity and I'm not going to let that force me to do a thing that I know isn't right.

FRITZ—Den I ask you something else—Tell Lione—

FRANK—No!

FRITZ—You tink I'm crazy—but I tell you if you make Lione your friend—if you make her understand you—she will kill all de talk—she will be a help. You need a woman on your side, and if once you get Lione, she fight for you—and she wipe up de floor mit everybody else.

FRANK—I don't want to buy her friendship.

FRITZ—No—no, it would not be dot. She—I tell you she need you, too. She need a good woman friend. Lione has a big heart, if it is—if it just get hold de right ting. She fight you now—but it is only like a big child dat don't know how to control its badness. If you just get her once—you could make her lof you, if you try—but first she has got to belief you.

FRANK—You're a funny, dear old boy, Fritz. I'm just as much to blame as Lione when we scrap.

FRITZ—Will you do it? Will you tell her? Will you?

FRANK—Yes, I will.

FRITZ—Ah—I am so glad. (*There is a knock at the hall door.*)

FRANK—Yes, come in.

GASKELL—(*Opening door wearing his hat and coat.*) Hello! (*Looking jealously from one to the other.*)

FRANK—(*Moving toward Gaskell.*) Oh, hello, what are you doing here this time of day? Did

you come to the exhibition? You're rather early. It doesn't begin till four o'clock.

GASKELL—Oh, is this the day for the show? No—I came to—I went to your room, Bahn, and I went to yours— (*To Frank.*) There's a concert on for this afternoon—and the young violinist who was booked to play is laid up—fell and broke his arm this morning. The manager—Holbrooke, is a friend of mine, and called me up because I had spoken to him about you. (*Nodding to Fritz.*)

FRANK—Oh—

GASKELL—Will you go on? Will you play? Chance of your life. Cracker-jack audience.

FRANK—Oh, your chance has come at last Fritz! It's too splendid—I could cry—it's too splendid. You'll play the concerto and then you must play your own slumber song. It's too splendid—I can't believe it. (*Turning to Gaskell.*) Think what it means to him—Oh, Fritz! I'm so glad. I'm so—What will you play, Fritz?

FRITZ—I cannot play.

FRANK—What?

FRITZ—I cannot play.

FRANK—What do you mean?

FRITZ—Dot is what I mean. I cannot play.

FRANK—Have you gone mad? It's the chance of your life, as Mr. Gaskell says. Are you fooling? Here's the opportunity—in your hand—are you go-

ing to take it?

FRITZ—We cannot always take what comes. (*Looks at Gaskell.*) I cannot take dis. (*He goes out closing the door. Frank and Gaskell stare at the door for an instant.*)

FRANK—I don't understand.

GASKELL—Impudent pig-headed—irresponsible set—every one of them. How do they expect to get along if they don't take a chance when you hand it out to them? Bohemians! Geniuses! Damn fools, I say.

FRANK—Oh, Fritz, isn't like that. There's something else—some reason. What was the matter with him? Something came over him—I don't—

GASKELL—Why, it's me—that's what's the matter with him. He won't take it from me, because he's so jealous of you he's crazy. If I'd known he was such a fool, I'd have had them send to him direct, so he wouldn't have known I had anything to do with it. That would have pleased you? But I tho't the safest and quickest way to get him was to come and find him myself. Sorry I've balled it up. You're friend's so fine and sensitive I don't know how to handle him.

FRANK—Don't be unjust to Fritz just because you've lost your temper. I must say I don't blame you for that—he did seem awfully rude and ungrateful, but I know he didn't mean it. He—

GASKELL—Mean it? Good Lord, what did he mean then?

FRANK—That's just what I don't know.

GASKELL—You're trying to find another reason for what's just plain ordinary jealousy. Do you want me to keep out of his way?

FRANK—Don't be ridiculous.

GASKELL.—(*Taking both her hands.*) Do you want me to clear out and let you alone?

FRANK—(*Trying to draw her hands away.*) This has nothing to do with the case.

GASKELL—Yes, it has. Everything to do with it. He doesn't make any more difference to me than a mosquito—but if you—good God, I love you—and you know it. (*He catches her to him and kisses her, then slowly lets her go. She puts her hands over her face and turns away.*)

GASKELL—I—you've kept me outside. I know he knows—the whole business—what ever it is. You've shut me out. But I know you're making a mistake by making a mystery of your life.

FRANK—You mean I ought to tell about Kiddie—explain and prove every bit of my life?

GASKELL—I don't put it that way. I mean everything ought to be—open—understood.

FRANK—I tho't you said you accepted me just as you see me here—just as you accept a man.

GASKELL—In the beginning I tho't I did. But,

when a man loves a woman—the whole world changes to him. He wants to protect her—he wants to understand her. He wants to look into her eyes and see the truth.

FRANK—You're afraid of what you might see in mine?

GASKELL—Tell me—what ever it is.

FRANK—Why should I?

GASKELL—Frank, don't fool with me. I love you. That's why I ask. That's why I care. I want to understand you. Why won't you tell me? Have you told this other man?

FRANK—He never asked me.

GASKELL—Do you love him? Are you going to marry him? Are you? You've got to tell me that. Are you going to marry him?

FRANK—No.

GASKELL—Then I'm going to make you love me. I love you. I love you—I tell you. This child is the most important thing in your life. I ask you to tell me what he is to you.

FRANK—How dare you say that to me?

GASKELL—Because I love you. That gives me the right.

FRANK—What if I said to you; "I love you, but I don't believe you. You must prove to me that everything in your life has been just what *I* think it ought to be."

GASKELL—I'm a man. You're a woman. I love you. I have the right to know your life.

FRANK—You mean if Kiddie were my own child, you couldn't ask me to marry you?

GASKELL—Is he?

FRANK—And if he were? Can't a woman live thro' that and be the better for it? How dare a man question her! How dare he!

GASKELL—Do you mean—(*Lione throws open the door and stops in supercilious surprise.*)

LIONE—Oh—I beg your pardon! I didn't know Mr. Gaskell was here. I should have knocked.

GASKELL—It's always a pretty good idea to knock, don't you think?

LIONE—Oh, I don't know. I'm such an open frank, sort of a person that somehow it never occurs to me that I ought to knock at the door of my own room. (*Emile, Wells and Clara follow her in.*)

FRANK—There are some people who think all doors ought to be open—always—even to the innermost rooms of one's soul—so that all the curious world may walk in and look about and see if he approves of what he finds there.

LIONE—Do you mean I am one of those?

FRANK—You know whether you are or not.

LIONE—If you mean I am curious about you, you're mistaken. I'm not curious—and I am not

deceived.

FRANK—Deceived?

LIONE—No. The real situation is too apparent for me to pretend not to see it.

FRANK—You'll have to speak plainer than that.

LIONE—Do you really want to discuss it here?

FRANK—I do.

LIONE—Well, really, if you insist. A certain resemblance in Kiddie's miniature attracted my attention. We all see it.

WELLS—I object, Lione—

EMILE—If you please—

CLARA—How can you, Lione?

FRANK—Where is Kiddie's miniature. I couldn't find it.

CLARA—It must be there.

FRANK—No, it isn't.

CLARA—Why, I—

LIONE—(*Holding it out to Frank.*) Here it is.

FRANK—A certain resemblance—you say? (*Fritz comes into the open door.*)

LIONE—(*Looking at Fritz.*) We all see it.

FRITZ—(*Stepping forward.*) You have broken your promise.

LIONE—No! I promised if you told the truth—but you told me an absurd thing. Fritz saw it too, but he has a different explanation, of course.

FRITZ—(*Looking at Frank in agony of appeal.*)

No! Don't—

GASKELL—What do you all mean? What resemblance are you talking about? Confound your impertinence! What do you mean?

LIONE—I'll tell you—

FRITZ—No, you will not.

LIONE—I will. Why shouldn't I? I will.

FRITZ—No, I say you will not.

GASKELL—Tell it—tell it! Say it. What do you mean?

LIONE—I mean—

FRANK—You needn't. They mean that Kiddie looks like me. (*A pause. They stare at Frank as she walks out quietly.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III

Time—Six hours later. Eight o'clock the same evening.

Place—Same as Act I. Chandelier and both lamps are lighted—shades are drawn in windows.

At curtain—Frank wearing a house gown of striking simplicity, is seated by table sewing. Kiddie on the couch, is reading aloud.

KIDDIE—(Reading.) And—Fido—runs and—gets—the ball—f-r-o-m—from—the water—and takes—it—to his m-a-s-t-e-r.

FRANK—Master.

KIDDIE—Master—and Willie—takes—it—to his f-a-t-h-e-r?

FRANK—You know that.

KIDDIE—No, I don't.

FRANK—Look at it again.

KIDDIE—F-a-t fatter.

FRANK—No—no.

KIDDIE—F-a-t-h—father.

FRANK—Of course.

KIDDIE—What's my father?

FRANK—Why do you ask that?

KIDDIE—'Cause to-day at school two boys were talking about their fathers and one said his was a

lawyer and one of 'em said his was a barber.

FRANK—A barber?

KIDDIE—Or a banker—I don't remember.

FRANK—Oh!

KIDDIE—And they asked me what mine was.
What is he?

FRANK—(*Going to sit beside Kiddie.*) He went away a long time ago—You don't want him. Aren't I a good father? Don't I give you all you need?

KIDDIE—Maybe I don't need one—but I'd like—

FRANK—Like what?

KIDDIE—Oh, I'd just like to see him sittin' round.

FRANK—I love you as much as if I were your father and mother and sisters and brothers and uncles and aunts. You have to be all those to me, too, you know, because I haven't any. We must tell each other everything and keep close and think all the time of how we can make each other happy. Mustn't we?

KIDDIE—If you want to make me happy, why didn't you take me to see my picture this afternoon? That made me very *unhappy*.

FRANK—It made me unhappy too, but I really couldn't take you, dearie. Something happened. I really couldn't take you. I'm so sorry.

KIDDIE—But it's just down stairs. I could have gone by myself. (*Looking at her closely.*) Have

you been crying?

FRANK—No—no. Are my eyes red?

KIDDIE—Your nose is.

FRANK—Do you love me?

KIDDIE—You bet.

FRANK—How much?

KIDDIE—As much as— (*Stretching his arms out full length. There is a knock at door.*)

FRANK—Oh—

FRANK—You open the door, Kiddie. (*Kiddie marches to the door and opens it wide. Gaskell stands in the doorway.*)

KIDDIE—Goodie! It's Mr. Gaskell.

GASKELL—May I come in?

FRANK—I—don't—

GASKELL—I'm coming. I want to talk to you.

KIDDIE—Don't you want me to hear it?

GASKELL—Well—to be very honest, I would like to talk to just Miss Ware—if you don't mind.

KIDDIE—I've got to pick up my paints I left all over the floor then I'll be back. (*He goes out L. closing the door.*)

GASKELL—I've been thinking—since that—since this afternoon. I was a cad. At least that's what I seemed to you. I don't know what those other duffers were driving at—Oh, I do know in a way—but—All I mean is that I love you and ask for your—confidence.

FRANK—I'm not angry now, but I was then—so horribly angry and hurt. I could tell you who his mother was and prove it in a hundred ways but don't ask me to do that. Oh, Malcolm—You must believe me—just *me*. Look at me. I give you the one love of my life.

GASKELL—(*Catching her in his arms.*) Frank!

FRANK—I love you. I love you.

GASKELL—My darling! It was hell to doubt you, but I couldn't help it, dear. It was only because I love you so. Because I want you to be the most perfect woman in the world. Do you understand?

FRANK—And don't you see why I wanted you—of all people in the world to trust me—in every way? Don't you understand?

GASKELL—No, not quite. (*Sitting beside her.*) When will you marry me?

FRANK—Oh, I don't know.

GASKELL—I want to take care of you. You need it as much as any woman does. Do you love me?

FRANK—I've tried—not to.

GASKELL—Don't say that. Why?

FRANK—I haven't wanted to love anybody—and when I knew I was beginning to care—I didn't want to.

GASKELL—When did you know you—cared?

FRANK—Oh—When I began to fight with you.

You made me so awfully angry—and then I was always wretched until we made up. I began to know your step in the hall, and when you opened the door and stood there I knew something strong and sweet, something stronger than myself was coming in.

GASKELL—I'm a beast in lots of ways and stubborn as a mule—but I can take care of you and I'll be good to you.

FRANK—When did you first know *you* cared?

GASKELL—From the first minute I saw you.

FRANK—Oh, every man says that. You know that isn't true. I wouldn't want it to be. I'll tell you when I first knew you cared.

GASKELL—When?

FRANK—Do you remember that day—it was—it was Sunday evening about three months ago. You were here and Fritz came in with some roses for me and you didn't look at me for the rest of the evening. You talked to Clara every minute.

GASKELL—Oh, come, I wasn't quite such an ass as that.

FRANK—You were. You were just as silly as you could be, and perfectly adorable. When you'd gone I—

GASKELL—You what—

FRANK—I won't tell you.

GASKELL—Oh, please tell me.

FRANK—No.

GASKELL—Oh, please. What did you do when I'd gone?

FRANK—I won't tell.

GASKELL—I don't believe you love me at all. Do you?

FRANK—Um—you haven't the faintest idea how much.

GASKELL—Well—tell me—tell me how much.

FRANK—I never can. You don't know what it means for a woman to love only one man in all her life.

GASKELL—Oh, now Frank—

FRANK—It's true. You're the one man, Malcolm. That's why I've tried to resist it because it means so terribly much to me. My life has been filled with other things you know—with Kiddie—and my work. They absorbed me and satisfied me; and when you—when love began to crowd in—to overpower me—I was afraid. It seemed almost like being a traitor to myself. Oh, it means such a—such an overwhelming thing for a woman to give up to love after—she's—she's been—

GASKELL—After she's been as strong and independent as you have been. I'm the luckiest dog on earth. I don't see how I got you.

FRANK—Just because you are you. Oh, don't ever disappoint me. Be big and fine and honest al-

ways—let me lean on you and worship you.

GASKELL—Kiss me. (*She puts her head back and he bends over her kissing her. Kiddie opens the door and comes in, standing amazed.*)

KIDDIE—Is that what you were talking about—kissing her?

GASKELL—No, a man never talks much about that.

KIDDIE—(*Going to Frank and throwing his arms about her and kissing her fiercely.*) She says I am the only man that can kiss her.

GASKELL—Well, let me see if I can do it like that.

FRANK—No—no!

KIDDIE—What made you let him do it, Frankie?

GASKELL—I'll tell you.

FRANK—No—no! Please. I'll tell you after awhile, Kiddie—when I put you to bed.

GASKELL—Will you kiss me too?

KIDDIE—I'll kick you. (*Gaskell laughs.*)

FRANK—Oh, Kiddie, you don't mean that.

KIDDIE—Yes, I do. You said I always had to take care of you.

FRANK—Yes—but— (*There is a loud knocking at door C.*) Oh, heavens! Go over there. (*Motioning Gaskell away.*)

KIDDIE—I'll tell on you.

FRANK—Kiddie, you won't do that, will you?

You never tell tales, you know. Will you? (*He hesitates a second, then shakes his head.*)

GASKELL—(*In a very loud voice, going to door.*) If you'll come down to my room with me, Kiddie, I'll give you—(*He opens the door—Clara is there waiting, with the pillows, coat, etc., which were borrowed.*) Oh, I beg your pardon, did you knock?

CLARA—Yes, I did.

GASKELL—I'm afraid I was talking so loud nobody heard you. I say, Kiddie, if you'll come down I'll give you—well, you can tell me what you want most when we get there. (*After slight hesitation Kiddie goes to Gaskell.*)

KIDDIE—I haven't forgiven him, but I'd like to see what he's got. (*Kiddie goes out C.—followed by Gaskell.*)

CLARA—Here's your coat. I am so much obliged. I wore it—but I must say I was rather ashamed to after what happened.

FRANK—I don't care now what happened.

CLARA—Why?

FRANK—Because something else has happened that makes that affair this afternoon seem very insignificant.

CLARA—Does it? I tho't you'd be so furious with everyone of us that you'd never speak to us again. I was really afraid to come up—but I did.

FRANK—I am glad you did.

CLARA—But I want to tell you I wasn't in it. I didn't—

FRANK—Let's not talk about it. Sit down. How was the exhibition?

CLARA—A fizzle. A perfect fizzle.

FRANK—Oh, no. I am so sorry.

CLARA—Cousin Mabel didn't come at all. Some people she'd asked were there, and of all the snippy snobs I ever saw! They only stayed a minute and were so out of breath and asked me how I could possibly climb two flights. Only two mind.

FRANK—Good thing they didn't have to come to see me.

CLARA—One woman asked me why I didn't have one of those lovely studios on 57th St. Oh, dear, what's the use. (*Bursting into tears.*) I'm so discouraged I don't know what to do.

FRANK—Oh, no, you're not. You're tired and nervous.

CLARA—Yes, I am too discouraged. I've tried just as hard as I can for ten years—and scrimped and scraped and taken snubs and pretended I was ambitious and didn't care for anything but my work, and look at me—don't even know how I am going to pay my next month's rent. I'm so sick and tired of it all I don't know what to do. I'd marry any man that asked me.

FRANK—Now, you're not going to lose your nerve like this.

CLARA—I would. I'd marry anything that could pay the bills. Oh, I am so tired—so tired of it all.

FRANK—Poor little girl. It is a hard fight, isn't it?

CLARA—It doesn't pay. I've been too terribly respectable and conventional all my life to succeed. If I were like you—you're so strong and independent—you believe in women taking care of themselves.

FRANK—I believe in women doing the thing they're most fitted for. You should have married, Clara, when you were a young girl—and been taken care of all your life. Why didn't you? Don't you believe in that?

CLARA—No man has ever asked me to marry him. I've never had a beau—a real beau—in my life. I—I've always been superfluous and plain. Absolutely superfluous. I'm not necessary to one single human being. I'm just one of those everlasting women that the world is full of. There's nobody to take care of me and I'm simply not capable of taking care of myself. I've tried—God knows I've tried—and what is the use? What under Heaven's do I get out of it? If I were a man—the most insignificant little runt of a man—I could persuade some woman to marry me—and could have

a home and children and hustle for my living—and life would mean something. Oh, I can't bear it, Frank. I can't bear it! I often wish I were pretty and bad and could have my fling and die. (*Sobbing she falls on the couch—huddled and helpless.*)

FRANK—Life has been dull and common place and colorless for you—but there are worse things than that. You've learned that life is easier for men than for women—you know what it is to struggle for existence—come and help me in some of the things I'm trying to do for girls. I'd like to have you teach drawing and modeling in this new club we're opening.

CLARA—Oh—would you?

FRANK—Would you be willing to live there? To be one of the women in charge—and help the girls in a personal way?

CLARA—Oh—do you think I could help anybody?

FRANK—Come over and try it, Clara, and see. You'll never wish again that you were pretty and bad, after you've seen a girl come off the streets and get to be a decent woman.

CLARA—I don't think I could actually do anything, but Oh, heavens, Frank, I would like to get hold of something.

FRANK—You— (*A ra-ta-tat-tat at the door.*)
That's Fritz.

CLARA—(*Wiping her eyes and blowing her nose.*) Oh dear, I don't want to see anyone. I am going out thro' your bedroom. I—I am so, awfully grateful, Frank, but—I—can't— (*She chokes with tears and hurries out. Another rap—Frank opens the door.*)

FRITZ—I would like to see you.

FRANK—Come in. (*She goes to sit in arm chair below the fire and Fritz closing the door goes to couch.*)

FRITZ—You tink I haf broken my promise? You tink I haf been—dot I haf talked about you to Lione. Dot iss true—but not in de way that you tink. I was very foolish and I argue wid her and I say a very foolish ting—but it was not a bad ting—I mean it was not about you at all. It was about you—but it wasn't. I don't tink anything but what I always haf and dot iss dot you are de best and most honest woman in de world. Do you believe dot?

FRANK—I want to believe it—but, Oh, Fritz, how could you discuss me at all? I tho't you were so different from the others. I've told you everything. How could you talk about it?

FRITZ—I know. I know I was one big fool, but I lose my head—and I said a ting I wish back.

FRANK—And something else that disappointed me awfully this afternoon. Why on earth didn't

you take the chance Mr. Gaskell gave you to play?

FRITZ—I couldn't.

FRANK—It can't be because of Malcolm Gaskell himself, can it?

FRITZ—You must not ask me.

FRANK—For goodness sake speak out. I'm sick of suspicion and curiosity. How dare they take Kiddie's picture down and try to squeeze something out of it? How dare they? Of course they decided that he looks like me. Isn't it a joke? Let's not have any more made up scandals. If you have anything against Gaskell go and tell him so—like a man.

FRITZ—You would like to believe in him above any man in the world?

FRANK—I do.

FRITZ—Den I will ask him some ding—some body has got to do it for you—but—if anything bad should come of dis—

FRANK—Oh—I'm not afraid—and he wouldn't lie to you!

FRITZ—You are very sure of him.—Don't—don't let it—don't let it—mean too much to you if—if he is not de man you tink. It *would* mean everything to you, won't it? Frankie, don't—don't break your heart about a man. I—I couldn't bear it—if anybody hurt—you. (*He raises her hand to his lips and she slowly puts her other hand on his*

head.)

FRANK—You—you've been so good to me, Fritz.

FRITZ—Don't tink I don't want to find him worthy of you—I want you to be happy. You know dot, don't you?

FRANK—I do.

FRITZ—He iss a strong man—he iss a success. He can take care of a woman—he has not failed.

FRANK—Neither have you, Fritz.

FRITZ—I haf nodding to offer a woman.

FRANK—You have to offer her what money can't buy for her.

FRITZ—No—the devotion of a life time don't count unless a man can say; "I can protect you from hunger and cold and keep you safe for always."—But—but I would like to know dot some man will do dot and dot he is worthy of you.

FRANK—You dear old Fritz! Your friendship is the most beautiful thing in my life. Oh, Fritz, life is so hard! Love is such a sad, mad, awful thing. It is the greatest danger in the world—isn't it the love of men and women. If we could only get along without it. We—you and I must be friends—always, Fritz. (*Her voice breaks. He tries to speak, but turns and goes quickly out.*)

FRITZ—(*Heard in the hall.*) No, no, don't go in.

LIONE—I will. Yes, I will. I guess I can see

her if you can. (*Lione rushes in.*) I don't know what Fritz has been telling you and I don't care. You said you wanted me to speak plainly—so I suppose you'd like to hear what I mean and why I mean it. I've come up as soon as I could get here.

FRANK—Well?

LIONE—Oh, we can't be blind, you know, even to please you.

FRANK—You mean Kiddie looks like me—and you draw the self evident conclusion.

LIONE—Oh, no, not at all. We mean he looks like Malcolm Gaskell.

FRANK—What?

LIONE—Why you ever let him come here—why you ever undertook such a pose and expected to carry it out is more—(*She stops as Frank goes slowly toward her.*)

FRANK—What do you mean?

LIONE—I mean he's your child and Malcolm Gaskell is his father.

FRANK—Lione, don't say that. Don't lie about a thing like that—it's too awful. Why do you? Kiddie isn't my child. I can prove it by people who knew his mother.

LIONE—(*Impressed by the blaze of truth in Frank's eyes.*) Then—who—*who was his father?*

FRANK—I don't know who his father was.

LIONE—For God's sake, do you mean that?

Haven't you ever had a—Haven't you ever seen the resemblance to Gaskell?

FRANK—No! No! No! No! Of course not! Not the slightest bit in the world. (*Hurrying to desk and taking miniature out of drawer.*) It isn't there at all. He doesn't look the least bit like him. See—look! (*They bend over the picture.*) What do you see? Where? What? I don't see it. Not a thing. Do you?

LIONE—Well—I—you—I—I tho't I did.

FRANK—Did they all say they saw it? All of them?

LIONE—Yes—no, not all of them. You can imagine anything in a picture.

FRANK—What did Fritz say?

LIONE—He believes you—and always has. From the first.

FRANK—But *he* saw the resemblance to Gaskell—*tho't* he saw it? (*Starting.*) That's what he meant. That's what he's going to ask Gaskell. Oh, it can't be. It can't be! Look again. What did you think was like him? I don't see a thing. I'm telling the truth, as I live. I'd see it if it were—there. What is it you think is like him? Tell me. What? What?

LIONE—Thro the eyes.

FRANK—The eyes? No—I can't see it. I can't see it. It's imagination. You can imagine any-

thing in a picture. You don't see it now do you? Oh, Lione, any man—any man in the world but Gaskell. (*Sinking into chair at R. of desk.*)

LIONE—I'm sorry I stirred this up. I ought to have kept my mouth shut. It *was* imagination. Let it alone I say. It's the wildest—most improbable thing in the world.

FRANK—But I've got to know. I've got to know.

LIONE—Let it alone. Good Lord, you can't stir up any man's life. You're lucky if it looks right on top. If you love him—take him—that's the point. Let it alone.

FRANK—Um—you don't understand. Who ever Kiddie's father is I've hated him all these years. Every time I look at Kiddie and think that somewhere in the world is a man who branded him with the shame of— Every time I see a girl who's made a mess of her life because she's loved a man, I think of Kiddie's poor little mother, with the whole burden and disgrace of it—and the man scott free. I tell you it's horrible—the whole thing—the relation between men and women. Women give too much. It's made me afraid to love any man. I've prided myself that I never would—because of Kiddie. Because I saw and went through that—I feel almost as deeply—as bitterly—as if I really were his mother. Don't you see? Don't you see?

LIONE—I suppose it does make a difference when a thing is brought home to you. I've never thought much about the whole business myself. Men are pigs of course. They take all they can get and don't give any more than they have to. It's a man's world—that's the size of it. What's the use of knocking your head against things you can't change? I never believed before that you really meant all this helping women business. What's the use? You can't change anything to save your neck. Men are men.

FRANK—If women decided that men should be equally disgraced for the same sin, they *would* be.

LIONE—Oh, yes—if—if. That's easy enough to preach. When it comes to morality a woman never holds anything against a man. What good would it do if she did? She'd be alone. Why, see here—what if—just suppose—that Malcolm Gaskell *were* Kiddie's father. You love him, and love is no joke with you. You've let yourself go at last. You've found the one man. What are you going to do about it? Throw him over—because you happen to find a little incident in his life that doesn't jibe with your theory? Where will you be? What becomes of you? Um? Not much fun for you for the rest of your life. He's the man you want—take him and thank your lucky stars you have him. That's all I see in it.

FRANK—It's all you say. He's the one man—but if it—were true—

LIONE—Well?

FRANK—If it were true—(*She shakes her head.*)

LIONE—Oh, bosh! Then you can't marry any man—they're all alike. You know—we've worked ourselves up over nothing after all. I've been at the bottom of all that picture business. It was easy enough to sort of hypnotize the others into it. You can see anything in a picture—in Clara's pictures. I've always been looking for something to get hold of about you because I was jealous. I'm a fool about Fritz. (*Frank quickly puts a hand over Lione's.*) I can't sing any more. I can't sleep. I can't eat. I'm a fool and I know it, but I can't help it.

FRANK—Go away from him for awhile, Lione, get away and he'll go after you.

LIONE—Oh, I don't know. I don't know.

FRANK—There it is! Love! What fools it makes us. Oh, I'm afraid of it!

LIONE—I don't believe this thing's true. Brace up. I don't believe it—not for a minute.

FRANK—I don't either—now. But it frightened me when you—

KIDDIE—(*Opening door and pulling Gaskell in by the hand.*) Come on. He didn't have anything I wanted—but this. (*Showing a large pocket knife.*

Frank goes quickly into her room.) It's got four blades. Look at this one.

LIONE—That's a stunner— isn't it?

KIDDIE—I can cut anything with it.

LIONE—Mind you don't cut the legs off the piano.

KIDDIE—I could. I could cut off your legs too. *(Kiddie goes to curl up in the L. end of couch— busy opening the blades of the knife. There is a pause.)*

LIONE—I think Frank wants you, Kiddie.

KIDDIE—Oh, no, she don't.

LIONE—*(Looking at Gaskell.)* I've just been telling Frank—

GASKELL—What?

LIONE—That I'm sorry for the row I kicked up this afternoon. I think everything is cleared up now.

GASKELL—A row's a pretty good thing once in a while for clearing the atmosphere.

LIONE—Well, I tell you, you never know anybody through and through till you fight with them. Good night, Kiddie. *(Lione and Gaskell nod to each other and she goes out closing the door.)*

GASKELL—*(Going to R. end of couch.)* Don't you think you had better go to bed now—and ask—Miss Ware, if I can't wait to see her?

KIDDIE—What do you want to see her for?

GASKELL—Well, several things.

KIDDIE—I don't know if I'll let you.

GASKELL—Oh, please.

(Frank opens her door and stands watching them.)

KIDDIE—I like you.

GASKELL—I'm glad.

KIDDIE—I'm much obliged for the knife. *(Giving his hand.)*

GASKELL—*(Taking Kiddie's hand.)* Don't mention it.

KIDDIE—But that isn't why I like you.

GASKELL—Why, then?

KIDDIE—Cause I do. *(Frank moves a step toward them.)*

GASKELL—*(Taking Kiddie's other hand.)* That's the best reason in the world, isn't it?

FRANK—You must say good night, now, Kiddie.

KIDDIE—*(To Gaskell.)* Do you mind if I go?

GASKELL—I'll have to stand it. *(Frank moves above the fire-place still watching them intently.)*

KIDDIE—*(Standing upon arm of couch.)* I'm as tall as you are.

GASKELL—*(Turning his back.)* Come on.

KIDDIE—*(Climbing on Gaskell's back.)* Get up! Look, Frankie! *(Kiddie laughs as Gaskell carries him across to the door L. and puts him down.)*

GASKELL—Good night old man.

KIDDIE—Good night—Frankie you come in ten minutes. (*He goes in closing the door.*)

GASKELL—He get's hold of you when you're alone with him, doesn't he? When he says he likes you—it sort of makes a fellow throw out his chest. What's the matter? Why do you look at me like that?

FRANK—Nothing. Was I staring?

GASKELL—Tired?

FRANK—Perhaps I am a little.

GASKELL—It's been rather an exciting day. Your hands are as cold as ice. Have you got nerves?

FRANK—No—no—I haven't.

GASKELL—You know—the more I think about what you've done for Kiddie,—the more I like you for it.

FRANK—Do you?

GASKELL—(*Holding her by the arms.*) Yes, I do. It begins to sink into me what the boy means to you—and that you actually believe all your ideas. I begin to see how through your love for the boy—and his mother's tragedy—you're sort of taken up a fight for all women.

FRANK—Yes, yes,—that's it.

GASKELL—I never thought before that you actually believed that things ought to be—the same—for men and women.

FRANK—No,—I know you didn't.

GASKELL—But I see that you believe it so deeply that you think it's a thing to go by—live by.

FRANK—Of course.

GASKELL—You couldn't get far by it.

FRANK—Not far. No. You wouldn't have asked me to marry you—if Kiddie had been my own child.

GASKELL—Oh, I don't—I—I love you. I want you. But when I knew he was not—the greatest change came that can come to a man. A radiance went over you. I wanted to kneel at your feet and worship you. That's the way all men feel towards good women and you can't change it. No woman with that in her life could be the same to any man—no matter how he loved her—or what he said or swore. It's different. It's different. A man wants the mother of his children to be the purest in the world.

FRANK—Yes, and a man expects the purest woman in the world to forgive him anything—everything. It's wrong. It's hideously wrong.

GASKELL—It's life. Listen to me,—sweetheart. I want to help you do the sensible thing—about Kiddie.

FRANK—What do you mean?

GASKELL—Don't you see that you must let it be known positively who his mother was?

FRANK—That's just what I will not do,

GASKELL—Wait. You've hurt yourself by keeping still about him. What good can you do him by that? You can't take away the curse that will follow him. He'll have to fight that himself. Don't you see it would be much better to tell the whole business while he's little—too little to know anything about it—and then send him away—put him in some good school?

FRANK—Give him up, you mean?

GASKELL—No, not at all. I don't ask you to do that. Watch over him of course and be a sort of guardian—but—clear this thing about yourself. What's the matter?

FRANK—No, turn your head that way—side ways.

GASKELL—What are you looking at? What do you see? Gray hairs? The whole point, dear girl, is—that you can't to save your life—make things right for the boy.

FRANK—You mean I can't take away the shame that his father put upon him?

GASKELL—Ye-s.

FRANK—What would you think—of Kiddie's father—if you ever saw him?

GASKELL—Oh,—let's not go into that again. Nobody knows the circumstances. You can't judge. Think about what I've said. We won't say anything more about it now. (*He goes to her and*

turns her toward him.) Do you love me?

FRANK—I shall never—never give Kiddie up.

GASKELL—I wish you'd tell me what you are looking at. You look as though you saw— Frank! —what's the matter with you?

FRANK—Nothing. Stand over there.

GASKELL—This is very funny.

FRANK—Oh, don't. (*Quickly putting her hand over her eyes.*)

GASKELL—(*Going to her.*) Frank—are you ill? For heaven's sake tell me what—

FRANK—I've got a blinding headache—I can't see anything.

GASKELL—Do you want me to go? (*She nods her head slowly—staring at him.*) I'm awfully sorry. Why didn't you tell me before and I wouldn't have—Frank—there's something the matter. You've got to tell me. What do you think you see? (*Taking hold of her.*)

FRANK—Please go.

GASKELL—Are you angry? Look at me. Tell me what it is.

FRANK—Please—Just go—I want to think. Go now—please—pl-ease. I can't see. (*Hurt and a little angry he moves backwards toward door.*) Oh—it can't be—it isn't—it can't be! It can't be! It isn't! It isn't!

GASKELL—What?

FRANK—Did you ever know a girl named—Alice Ellery?

GASKELL—*(After a pause.)* Who told you that?

FRANK—Oh, you *did*.

GASKELL—Who told you? Who told you?

FRANK—No one.

GASKELL—Was it anybody here—in this house?

FRANK—How did you—know her? I mean—oh—tell me!

GASKELL—Do you know the whole business?

FRANK—I don't know anything.

GASKELL—You do—you do.

FRANK—No. I don't. I—I'm not prying into your life. It isn't that. But you must tell me something. I've got to know. I've got to know. *(She drags herself to the couch, Gaskell goes to the fire and after a long pause speaks in a low hard tone.)*

GASKELL—It happened about six years ago. I never said anything about marrying her. She knew what she was doing.

FRANK—But, did you—did you desert her?

GASKELL—I didn't! She went away.

FRANK—And you never heard from her?

GASKELL—Never.

FRANK—Never knew what happened to her?

GASKELL—No. She left a note saying she knew

then she'd been a fool—and that she couldn't face the rest. I'm not proud of it, you know. I'd give a good deal to wipe it out—but—it happened. Are you going to hold it up against me? Is that one of your theories? Who told you?

FRANK—No one. I knew her. I was in Paris then. She came to me.

GASKELL—And she told you who—?

FRANK—Oh, not that it was you—no—no.

GASKELL—How did you know then?

FRANK—Her child was born in my house.

GASKELL—What?

FRANK—It was Kiddie! |

GASKELL—No!

FRANK—They've seen the likeness—I've just seen it. I had to ask you. I had to know.

GASKELL—Kiddie!

FRANK—Kiddie—Kiddie.

GASKELL—Don't take it like that. I love you better than my life. (*Trying to take hold of her.*)

FRANK—Oh, don't.

GASKELL—Look here, Frank, we love each other, and we've got to face it.

FRANK—Yes, we've got to face it.

GASKELL—Nothing—nothing can separate us.

FRANK—We are separated.

GASKELL—Only by your ideas.

FRANK—My ideas! They're horrible realities

now because it's you.

GASKELL—Frank—

FRANK—Every time I've looked at Kiddie I've cursed the man who ruined his mother and branded him with disgrace.

GASKELL—Frank, stop!

FRANK—I've loathed and despised that man, I tell you—and it's you. Before it was someone else—any one—some one unknown, but now it's you—you—you. (*She stops. They both turn with horror, as Kiddie, in his night clothes, stands watching them, a little wondering figure.*)

The Curtain Falls

ACT IV

Time—(Immediately following Act III.)

Place—(Same as Act III.)

At curtain—(Frank and Gaskell are standing as at end of Act III.)

KIDDIE—Why don't you come, Frankie?

FRANK—(*Moving slowly.*) Come, Kiddie. (*Kiddie hangs his head, then looks up at Gaskell slowly.*) Kiddie. (*Kiddie pushes past her and goes to Gaskell—Frank goes in to her room.*)

KIDDIE—Don't you like me any more? (*Gaskell doesn't answer.*) Do you want me to give the knife back? (*Moving closer to Gaskell.*) It's the best knife I ever had. I found another blade—look. (*Taking knife out of pocket and leaning against Gaskell to show it.*) You open it. Don't you want to? (*Kiddie looks steadily at Gaskell and then puts his hands on Gaskell's chest.*) Are you mad at me? Don't you like me any more? (*Kiddie throws his arms about Gaskell's neck. Gaskell holds him tensely a moment.*)

FRANK—(*Calling from her room.*) Come, Kiddie.

KIDDIE—I've got to go now, but I'll see you tomorrow. (*He goes in. There is a knock at hall*

door. After a moment Gaskell opens it. Fritz stands in door way.)

FRITZ—I came to find you. I went to your room. Are you going back now?

GASKELL—No, I'm going out.

FRITZ—I have something to say to you.

GASKELL—Well, say it.

FRITZ—Not here.

GASKELL—Go on. Miss Ware is putting Kiddie to bed.

FRITZ—I would rather you—

GASKELL—Say what you've got to say now. I'm in a hurry.

FRITZ—I—der has been—you know—der has been some—some talk about—about Kiddie.

GASKELL—Confounded impertinent set here.

FRITZ—Miss Ware is in a wrong position and some one has got to make it right for her.

GASKELL—Look here. You're meddling with something that doesn't concern you.

FRITZ—No, I'm not meddling. Some one has got to do dis for her.

GASKELL—You needn't trouble yourself. You can tell the rest of your curious friends that I know who this boy is.

FRITZ—You know?

GASKELL—And I've asked Miss Ware to marry me. That clears the whole business.

FRITZ—No, it doesn't.

GASKELL—What are you trying to do? I know all about him, I tell you, and if there's any more of this damnable talk they'll answer to me.

FRITZ—You know who the mother was?

GASKELL—I not only knew who she was—I knew *her*. That's enough.

FRITZ—You knew the fadder also?

GASKELL—That has nothing to do with Miss Ware.

FRITZ—Yes, it has. Der has been a horrible thing said here in dis house. Dey say he is her child—and yours.

GASKELL—It's a lie!

FRITZ—Part of it is a lie—but he is *yours*.

GASKELL—Why damn you—what—

FRITZ—Listen to me. I haf seen dis strange and strong resemblance. I haf watch him—I haf watch you—till I haf come to tink you are his fadder. (*A pause—Gaskell looks at Fritz then moves away.*) For de love of God if it is true don't marry dis woman without telling her—it will kill her if she ever find it out.

GASKELL—Now see here, Bahn, Miss Ware does know who Kiddie's father is.

FRITZ—No she does not know.

GASKELL—Yes she does and she is going to marry me. That clears the whole thing.

FRITZ—No, it does not clear her name, it will only make dem sure of what dey tink now—that he is her child and yours.

GASKELL—It's a hellish, infernal lie—and I'll—

LIONE—(*Rapping loudly and opening the hall door quickly.*) What are you doing? You're shouting so the whole house can hear you. (*Wells appears in door behind her.*)

GASKELL—Come in here. Shut the door. (*Lione enters, Wells follows, closing the door.*) So this is what you've been saying about her? You've been lying about a good woman.

LIONE—What have you told him, Fritz?

GASKELL—The whole business and I'll tell you who the boy is. I knew—the—mother. Maybe you'll believe that when I tell you—the boy is mine. (*There is a pause. They all watch Gaskell as he goes to stand before fire—his back to them.*) I only found this out a little while ago,—from something Miss Ware told me about—his mother who died in her house. I hope this knocks the truth into you.

LIONE—For my part I'm pretty much ashamed of what I've had to do in this.

GASKELL—It's happened. That's the end of it.

WELLS—I consider what has just been said a sacred confidence. I take my oath it will be so with me.

(*Lione and Fritz and Wells look at each other and slightly bow their heads in acknowledgment of a pledge.*)

GASKELL—Whether Miss Ware will marry me now, I don't know. That's all I have to say. (*Wells opens the door for Lione and follows her out. Fritz hesitates, takes a short step toward Gaskell, turns and goes out—closing the door. Gaskell remains looking into the fire as Frank comes back.*) Frank, this thing isn't going to make any difference in our lives, is it?

FRANK—(*Closing the door after her quietly.*) Whatever I do, Malcolm, you'll know I do without bitterness—without any spirit of revenge.

GASKELL—You mean if you throw me over?

FRANK—I mean if the future doesn't seem possible for us together.

GASKELL—Why shouldn't it be possible?

FRANK—You know.

GASKELL—No, I don't. This thing has been a shock to you—of course. It's shaken you terribly, but you haven't given me any real reason—any facts why there shouldn't be a future for us. I love you and I am going to have you.

FRANK—(*Moving away from him.*) Oh, don't please. I must—I must—

GASKELL—(*Following her.*) There's little enough in the world worth having, heaven knows.

Why should we miss each other?

FRANK—Kiddie—Kiddie.

GASKELL—Well—well—we love each other. That's the first thing to reckon with.

FRANK—Oh, you don't know yet what I mean.

GASKELL—Talk won't get us anywhere. We've got to look this thing square in the face, as it is. Either you throw me over, or you let me give you the rest of my life and make you happy.

FRANK—Oh, that isn't—

GASKELL—I love you, Frank. I'd lay down my life for you. You're the whole world to me.

FRANK—Love isn't the only thing in the world.

GASKELL—It's the biggest thing. We've found each other. Look at me. You know it's the one perfect thing on earth—a perfect love and we've found it.

FRANK—It never could be perfect while you believe what you do.

GASKELL—What's that got to do with the facts?

FRANK—Do you believe it wasn't wrong—just because you are a man?

GASKELL—Oh—

FRANK—Do you believe that?

GASKELL—(*After a pause.*) Yes.

FRANK—Oh!

GASKELL—Good heavens, Frank, I tho't you were so much bigger than the average woman. All

women kick against this and what good does it do? Why since the beginning of time one thing has been accepted for a man and another for a woman. Why on earth do you beat your head against a stone wall? Why do you try to put your ideals up against the facts?

FRANK—I'm not talking about my ideals now, nor the accepted thing. I'm talking about *you*, that *girl*, this *child*. You think I must excuse what you did—that it really wasn't wrong at all, just because you are a man.

GASKELL—It's too late to say these things to me now. You know—must have known when you first knew me that I'd—well that I'd lived a man's life. When you first loved me why didn't you think of all this?

FRANK—Ah, that's just it—I loved you. I took you as all women take men—without question. Oh, don't you see I'm not looking for something bad in men. If it hadn't been for him—if he hadn't been put into my arms a little helpless, nameless thing—if I hadn't seen that girl suffer the tortures of hell through her disgrace, I probably wouldn't have thought any more about this than most women do.

GASKELL—Isn't our love more to you than that?

FRANK—No!

GASKELL—Good God, Frank! You're a woman. You talk like a woman—you think like a woman.

I'm a man. What do you expect? We don't live under the same laws. It was never meant to be. Nature, nature made men different.

FRANK—Don't make nature the excuse for ruining the life of a good girl. Oh, Malcolm— (*Putting her hand on his arm.*) Do you think it wasn't wrong?

GASKELL—(*Drawing her to him.*) I only know I love you. You said you loved me. I won't give you up.

FRANK—Oh!

GASKELL—You're angry now. When you've had time to think you'll see. Frank, I love you. I love you.

FRANK—(*Getting away from him.*) Oh, no, no.

GASKELL—Frank, you're not as cold and hard as that. You're going to forgive me.

FRANK—Oh, I want to forgive you. If you could only see. If your soul could only see. Oh, dear God! Malcolm, tell me, tell me you know it was wrong—that you'd give your life to make it right. Say that you know this thing was a crime.

GASKELL—No! Don't try to hold me to account by a standard that doesn't exist. Don't measure me by your theories. If you love me you'll stand on that and forget everything else.

FRANK—I can't, I can't.

GASKELL—I'm not a man to beg, Frank. Do you want me to go? Is that it? Is this the end?

FRANK—There's nothing else.

GASKELL—Do you mean that?

FRANK—There's nothing else. It is the end.
(He goes out closing the door.)

The curtain falls

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